A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER FROM TUNIS

Our Moslem Sisters

A Cry of Need from Lands of Darkness
Interpreted by Those Who Heard It

EDITED BY

ANNIE VAN SOMMER

AND

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book with its sad, reiterated story of wrong and oppression is an indictment and an appeal. It is an indictment of the system which produces results so pitiful. It is an appeal to Christian womanhood to right these wrongs and enlighten this darkness by sacrifice and service. At the recent Mohammedan Educational Conference in Bombay the president of the gathering, the Agha Khan, himself a leading Moslem, spoke very trenchantly of the chief barriers to progress in the Moslem world. The first and greatest of these barriers in his opinion was "the seclusion of women which results in keeping half the community in ignorance and degradation and this hinders the progress of the whole." Surely the ignorance and degradation of one-half of a community which has a world population of 233 millions is a question that concerns all who love humanity.

The origin of the veil of Islam was, as is well known, one of the marriage affairs of Mohammed himself, with its appropriate revelation from Allah. In the twenty-fourth Surah of the Koran women are forbidden to appear unveiled before any member of the other sex, with the exception of near relatives.

And so by one verse the bright, refining, elevating influence of women was forever withdrawn from Moslem society. The evils of the zenana, the seraglio, the harem, or by whatever name it is called, are writ large over all the social life of the Moslem world. Keene says it "lies at the root of all the most important features that differentiate progress from stagnation."

In Arabia before the advent of Islam it was customary to bury female infants alive. Mohammed improved on the barbaric method and discovered a way by which *all* females could be buried alive and yet live on—namely, the veil. How they live on, this book tells! Its chapters are not cunningly devised fables nor stories told for the story's sake. Men and women who have given of their strength and service, their love and their life to ameliorate the lives of Moslem women and carry the torch of Truth into these lands of darkness write simply the truth in a straightforward way. All the chapters were written by missionaries in the various lands represented. And with three exceptions the writers were women. The chapter on Turkestan is by a converted Moslem; and the two chapters on the Yemen and the Central Soudan are by medical missionaries. The book has as many authors as there are chapters. For obvious reasons their names are not published, but their testimony is unimpeachable and unanimous. We read what their eyes have seen, what their hands have handled, and what

has stirred their hearts. It has stirred the hearts of educated Moslems too, in Egypt as well as in India. A new book on this very subject was recently published at Cairo by Kasim Ameen, a learned Moslem jurist. Although he denies that Islam is the cause, yet speaking of the present relation of the Mohammedan woman to man the author says:

"Man is the absolute master and woman the slave. She is the object of his sensual pleasures, a toy, as it were, with which he plays, whenever and however he pleases. Knowledge is his, ignorance is hers. The firmament and the light are his, darkness and the dungeon are hers. His is to command, hers is to blindly obey. His is everything that is, and she is an insignificant part of that everything.

"Ask those that are married if they are loved by their wives, and they will answer in the affirmative. The truth, however, is the reverse. I have personally investigated the conditions of a number of families that are supposed to be living in harmony, peace, and love, and I have not found one husband who truly loved his wife, or one wife who evinced a sincere affection for her husband. This outward appearance of peace and harmony—this thin veneering—only means one of three things, namely, either the husband is made callous and nonchalant by incessant strife, and has finally determined to let things take their course; or the wife allows herself to be utilized as an ordinary chattel, without uttering a

protest; or both parties are ignorant and do not appreciate the true value of life. In this last case, the parties are nearer to a sort of happiness than in the former two, although their happiness is negative in quantity and evanescent in nature." . . . . The writers of the following chapters believe that the only remedy for these social evils is the Gospel. That is why they write.

The occasion that led to the preparation and collection of this series of papers was the Cairo Conference. One of the most interesting sessions of that first general Conference on behalf of the Mohammedan world, held at Cairo April 4-9, 1906, was that on Woman's Work for Women. But the time was far too short nor had there been preparation for a full and free presentation and discussion of the condition and needs of our Moslem sisters. Those that loved them felt this and yet the women present seized the opportunity and unitedly sent forth the following appeal, endorsed by the whole Conference:

"Women's Appeal.

"We, the women missionaries, assembled at the Cairo Conference, would send this appeal on behalf of the women of Moslem lands to all the women's missionary boards and committees of Great Britain, America, Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Australia, and New Zealand.

"While we have heard with deep thankfulness of many signs of God's blessing on the efforts already put forth, yet we have been appalled at the reports which have been sent in to the Conference from all parts of the Moslem world, showing us only too plainly that as yet but a fringe of this great work has been touched.

"The same story has come from India, Persia, Arabia, Africa, and other Mohammedan lands, making evident that the condition of women under Islam is everywhere the same—and that there is no hope of effectually remedying the spiritual, moral, and physical ills which they suffer, except to take them the message of the Saviour, and that there is no chance of their hearing, unless we give ourselves to the work. *No one else will do it.* This lays a heavy responsibility on all Christian women.

"The number of Moslem *women* is so vast—not less than one hundred million—that any adequate effort to meet the need must be on a scale far wider than has ever yet been attempted.

"We do not suggest new organizations, but that every church and board of missions at present working in Moslem lands should take up their own women's branch of work with an altogether new ideal before them, determining to reach the whole world of Moslem women in this generation. Each part of the women's work being already carried on needs to be widely extended. Trained and consecrated women doctors; trained and consecrated

women teachers; groups of women workers in the villages; an army of those with love in their hearts to seek and save the lost. And, with the willingness to take up this burden, so long neglected, for the salvation of Mohammedan women, even though it may prove a very cross of Calvary to some of us, we shall hear our Master's voice afresh ringing words of encouragement: 'Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that these things which He saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.' 'Nothing shall be impossible unto you.' "

That this wonderful appeal might reach a wider circle and that its skeleton form might be clothed with the flesh and blood of real life experiences and so be not a resolution but a revelation,—this book was written. *May God give its message wings through His Spirit*

S. M. ZWEMER.

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We are indebted to the kindness of Mr. Talbot Kelly for the use of his picture on our cover. It is reproduced from "Egypt Painted and Described" by Talbot Kelly, published by Messrs A. & C. Black, Soho Square, London.

"All that took them captives hold them fast, they refuse to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong, the Lord of Hosts is His name; He shall thoroughly plead their cause."—JEREMIAH l. 33, 34.

"Deliver them that are carried away unto death, and those that are tottering to the slaughter see that thou hold back. If thou sayest, Behold we knew not this, doth not He that weigheth the hearts consider it, and He that keepeth thy soul, doth not He know it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works?"—PROVERBS xxiv. 11, 12. (R. V.)

"Open thy mouth for the dumb in the cause of all such as are left desolate. Open thy mouth, judge righteously, and minister judgment to the poor and needy."—PROVERBS xxxi. 8, 9. (R. V.)

OUR MOSLEM SISTERS

I

HAGAR AND HER SISTERS

"We must concentrate attention upon the mothers, for what the mothers are, the children will be." These words, spoken recently by a British statesman, are but the thoughts of many who have tried to save the children. And in looking at the millions of Moslems in the world to-day, and wondering why they are still as they were a thousand years ago, rather drifting backward than advancing, we turn to their women and find the cause. Mohammedan law, custom, and the example of their founder place woman on a level with beasts of burden and no nation rises above the level of its women.

The Lord Jesus is the only prophet come to this world who has raised women to what God meant them to be. It is only He who can save our Moslem sisters. When Hagar returns to Christ Ishmael shall live.

The story of Hagar, the mother of the Arabs, tells us of a young girl sacrificed for the scheme and

then the jealousy of an older woman who should have loved and pitied her. And it seems to some of us that it needs the widespread love and pity of the women of our day in Christian lands to seek and save the suffering sinful needy women of Islam.

You cannot know how great the need unless you are told; you will never go and find them until you hear their cry. And they will never cry for themselves, for they are down under the yoke of centuries of oppression, and their hearts have no hope or knowledge of anything better.

And so to-day, we want to make our voices heard for them. We want to tell you, our sisters at home, in words so plain that you can never again say: "Behold, we knew it not."

"In the mouth of two witnesses shall every word be established," was the law of Moses. In this book you have the evidence of more than a score of witnesses and they all speak the same things. Each one tells only that which she knows. No incident is given without personal knowledge, and most of the writers have the experience of ten, fifteen, or twenty years in the midst of the people of whom they tell.

Although we claim no literary merit, we have a thrilling story and plead for a hearing.

Read for yourselves what is going on in the lives of a hundred million women in the world to-day and take this burden on your hearts before God.

A long tress of dark hair, a white veil, a bit of flower, and a shining necklace. They are there above the bier of a young bride carried past our window to her grave. There was another one yesterday, and there will be more to-morrow. Hundreds of child-wives and sixty-two per cent. they tell us of all the babies born here, in Egypt, are taken to an early grave. We cannot know these things and not call upon you, our sisters, to come and try to save them. They are passing away in an endless procession, without ever having heard of Jesus, without ever knowing that He died for them, that an eternity of gladness and love may be theirs.

Although the voices in this book sound from many lands: Egypt, Tunis, Algiers, Morocco, Hausa Land, East Africa, Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Bulgaria, Persia, India, one story is told and one cry heard everywhere. There has been no communication between the writers, but there is absolute identity of evidence because all the Moslems of these lands are under Mohammedan law.

The world-wide suffering of Moslem women makes us read with wonder such words as were recently spoken by the secretary of the Pan-Islamic Society: "The Renaissance of Islam means the renaissance of humanity." Does the speaker think we are all blind, and deaf, and ignorant? These pages may enlighten him. We read further Mustapha Pasha Kamel's own words and tell him that

in these he speaks the truth. They were spoken to his own fellow-Moslems.

Mustapha Pasha Kamel said in the course of his speech to his co-religionists:

"Conquer with the force of knowledge and history the strong fortresses of prejudice and bigotry, and open wide the gates of your heart for the reception of Truth and Light. For a conquered people there is no cure better than a passionate devotion to Truth. Be ye, therefore, messengers of Light and Truth, the missionaries of brilliant and triumphant Truth, the army of physicians prescribing the bitter pills of Truth. Tell the effete and feeble rulers and princes, 'Awake from your deep slumber. Recover soon from your drunkenness caused by the possession of absolute authority, the boast of heraldry, and the braveries of pomp and pageantry. Awake ye, before the depth of degradation into which your subjects have fallen sound the deathknell of your rule and shake the very foundations of your throne. Awake before the day overtakes you when repentance and regrets will be of no avail.' Tell the rich who waste so much of their wealth in the pursuit of ignoble pleasures, and who do not spare a farthing for a noble cause, 'Awake before it is too late. Do not forget in the midnight of your intoxication that a bitter day of reckoning awaits you. Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen. Your fates are bound up with those of your people and your glory depends upon their prosperity. If

they rise, you rise. If they fall, you fall with them. Wealth is a poison if it becomes an instrument of evil; a life-giving antidote when devoted to a noble purpose. Regard it therefore as a divine gift and a sacred trust.' Tell the people who live the life of animals and are led like dumb cattle: 'Awake, and realize the true significance of life. Fill the earth and adorn it with the result of your labors.' Gentlemen, you alone can make them understand the full meaning of life. O physicians! the patient is in a critical state, and delay spells death." . . . .

If the thinking men of the Mohammedan world really believe what is here said to them by their own champion, we ask them will they not seek unto God for a remedy? And it may be He will turn their thoughts to their own homes, and let them see *what is, why it is, and to think what might be.*

The homes of the sons of Ishmael might be happy and united, the abode of gladness and family love, but they are the opposite of this. Few Mohammedans know that such a home is possible. They only know a place full of jealousy, of quarrelling and evil talk. What wonder that they have the proverb: "The threshold of the house weeps for forty days when a girl is born."

Unwelcome at birth, unloved in her life-time, without hope in her death; and she might be the joy of your heart, the life of your home, and the hope of your old age. Will you not ask yourselves, our

brothers, can these things be? "Have we wandered in the dark for centuries, misled by blind leaders of the blind, and missing the good things offered us by the God of Ishmael?" It was through Hagar his mother that Ishmael lived.

"She sat over against him, and lift up her voice and wept. And God heard the voice of the lad, and the angel of God called to Hagar out of heaven, and said unto her, What aileth thee, Hagar? fear not, for God hath heard the voice of the lad where he is. Arise, lift up the lad and hold him in thine hand; for I will make him a great nation. And God opened her eyes, and she saw a well of water; and she went and filled the bottles with water, and gave the lad drink. And God was with the lad, and he grew, and dwelt in the wilderness."

To-day we cry to our Father in Heaven to let us be the messengers of comfort to Hagar—and we will ask Him to open her eyes that she may see the Well of the Water of Life, and that she may hold it to the lips of her sons and daughters in the Moslem world. The following touching incident and poem by one who has labored long among Moslem women in Persia may well be our opening prayer ere we hear the cry of need from distant lands in these chapters:—

"It was the Communion Day in our Church, and the service proceeded as usual. My thoughts were all of my own unworthiness and Christ's love to me, until Mr. E. asked the question nobody ever

notices, 'Has any one been omitted in the distribution of the bread?' And it seemed to me I could see millions on millions of women rising silently in India, Africa, Siam, Persia, in all the countries where they need the Lord, but know Him not, to testify that they had been omitted in the distribution of the bread and cup! And they can take it from no hands but ours, and we do not pass it on. Can Jesus make heaven so sweet and calm that we can forgive ourselves this great neglect of the millions living now, for whom the body was broken and the blood shed, just as much as for us?"

The feast was spread, the solemn words were spoken;
Humbly my soul drew near to meet her Lord,
To plead His sacrificial body broken,
His blood for me outpoured.

Confessing all my manifold transgression,
Weeping, to cast myself before His throne,
Praying His Spirit to take full possession,
And seal me all His own.

On Him I laid each burden I was bearing,
The anxious mind, of strength so oft bereft,
The future dim, the children of my caring,
All on His heart I left.

"How could I live, my Lord," I cried, "without Thee!
How for a single day this pathway trace,
And feel no loving arm thrown round about me,
No all-sustaining grace?

"Oh show me how to thank Thee, praise Thee, love Thee,
For these rich gifts bestowed on sinful me,
The rainbow hope that spans the sky above me,
The promised rest with Thee."

As if indeed He spoke the answer, fitted
Into my prayer, the pastor's voice came up:
"Let any rise if they have been omitted
When passed the bread and cup."

Sudden, before my inward, open vision,
Millions of faces crowded up to view,
Sad eyes that said, "For us is no provision;
Give us your Saviour, too!"

Sorrowful women's faces, hungry, yearning,
Wild with despair, or dark with sin and dread,
Worn with long weeping for the unreturning,
Hopeless, uncomforted.

"Give us," they cry; "your cup of consolation
Never to our outstretching hands is passed,
We long for the Desire of every nation,
And oh, we die so fast!

"Does He not love us, too, this gracious Master?
'Tis from your hand alone we can receive
The bounty of His grace; oh, send it faster,
That we may take and live!"

"Master," I said, as from a dream awaking,
"Is this the service Thou dost show to me?
Dost Thou to me entrust Thy bread for breaking
To those who cry for Thee?

"Dear Heart of Love, canst Thou forgive the blindness
That let Thy child sit selfish and at ease
By the full table of Thy loving kindness,
And take no thought for these?

"As Thou hast loved me, let me love; returning
To these dark souls the grace Thou givest me;
And oh, to me impart Thy deathless yearning
To draw the lost to Thee!

"Nor let me cease to spread Thy glad salvation,
Till Thou shalt call me to partake above,
Where the redeemed of every tribe and nation
Sit at Thy feast of love!"

Will those who read these chapters unite with us, as we make this prayer our own, and place our lives at His disposal for the salvation of the Mohammedan World?

ANNIE VAN SOMMER,
Alexandria, Egypt.

II

EGYPT, THE LAND OF BONDAGE

EGYPT was the home of the earliest civilization in the world, which archæology traces back beyond 3000 years B. C. The home of a race skilled both in the fine and mechanical arts; loving nature, honoring women, and deeply impressed with the seriousness of life on both sides the grave. The valley of the Nile, which is the true Egypt, is unlike any other part of the world. It has neither Alpine grandeur, nor pastoral softness, nor variety of plain and upland, meadow and forest. Its low hills have neither heather nor pine upon them. Egypt is the land of light, of glowing sunshine, of moonlight and starlight so brilliant that night is but a softer day. From the time that Israel's ancestors went down thither it has drawn men of every clime with a peculiar fascination.

As we write we have before us a glimpse of the majestic Nile, stretching through one thousand miles of desert till it flows into the Mediterranean Sea. "Wherever the river cometh, there is life." Everywhere along its banks the desert has become fertile, and there are countless towns and villages.

DAUGHTERS OF EGYPT

The productive capacity of the land had always depended upon the annual overflow of the Nile, but every summer during the season of high Nile billions and billions of cubic feet of water would roll away a rich and wanton waste into the sea, simply because there were not enough channels to carry it out into the thirsty sands of the desert. Energetic men conceived the idea of bringing these waste waters into control, to carry them out through the surrounding countries, bringing life and prosperity where there was dearth and desolation. For this purpose several great dams were built; one at Cairo, one at Assiut and one at Assouan, making it possible to store up much of the water which had formerly gone to waste, and canals were dug to carry the life-giving water out to the desert where thousands of acres of land have been reclaimed.

The large cities of Egypt are densely populated. A town of twenty-five thousand people is considered a mere village. It might be wondered what the people do for a livelihood, but they all seem to do something. There are all sorts of tradesmen and artificers. It is next to impossible to enumerate them, there's the:—

Richman, poorman, beggarman, thief;
Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief;
Butcher, baker,
Candle-stick maker,
Soldier, sailor,
Tinker, tailor, etc., etc.

There are few signs of extreme want, but disease and deformity meet one everywhere, and blindness is perhaps the most pitiful.

Egypt is largely an agricultural country, and naturally the largest percentage of her inhabitants are tillers of the soil. A little more than half belong to the peasant class and are known as "fellaheen." They are industrious after their own fashion, conservative to the point of bigotry, yet good-humored and peaceable. The peasant class are the hope of Egypt. They look back to a past full of crushing tyranny, political and religious, but under the improved political condition of the country the Egyptian peasant is beginning to widen his horizon and to aim for education and civilization. Poor they certainly are, but what of that when they have enough to eat such as it is and can spend their whole lives in sunshine and fresh air? Warm enough with the lightest clothing, well sheltered by the rudest cabin, no hard winters to provide against, and no coal to buy.

Such is the physical condition of Egypt and the Egyptian. What of the moral and spiritual?

Nine-tenths of the people are Mohammedans, thus Mohammedan ideas rule the thought and manner of life.

Because Mohammedans worship one God, many people say, "Let them alone, their religion is good enough for them, it is even better suited to them than Christianity." It is true that Mohammedan-

ism was a revolt against the idolatry and corruption of the early Christian churches, but is that revolt, even though an honest effort to find a purer form of worship, any excuse for not holding out to them the true way of salvation? Is not that revolt rather a trumpet call to Christianity, awakening her to her great responsibility toward the unbelief of Islam, whose apostasy was caused by the unfaithfulness of the old Christian churches of the East?

No one who has drunk deeply at the fountain of evangelical truth can defend Islam. It has been commonly supposed that the God of the Koran is the God of the New Testament. Those who have made the subject a matter of careful study and investigation find that they are totally different. The God of Christianity is a God of love, the God of Islam is an Oriental despot.

The element of love is left out of both the religion and morality of Islam. Marriage is not founded upon love but upon sensuality. A mother was rebuked for arranging a marriage for her fourteen-year-old son. Her excuse was, "I do it to keep him from learning the bad habit of visiting prostitutes." The sensual nature has been trained in the Egyptian to an indescribable degree of disgusting perfection. As some one has said, "Mohammedans have added a refinement of sensuousness to pagan sensuality." As a result of this training men and women have sunk to depths of degradation unconsciously mani-

fested in their customs, in their speech, and in their life.

For twelve centuries the blight of Islam has fallen over the fortunes of Egypt. Politics, commerce, learning, all have felt its withering blast, but that which has most keenly felt the blast and blight of Islam is society. There is no word in the Arabic language for home, the nearest approach to it being "beit," which means "house" or "a place in which to spend the night." To quote from an interesting writer on this thought—"The word is lacking because the idea is lacking." "Home, sweet Home" with all its wealth of meaning is a conception foreign to the average Oriental. An educated young Moslem with advanced ideas in many respects was asked if the members of his family took their meals together. He said they did not, each one when he became hungry told the servant to bring food. "Would it not be better to eat together?" "Yes, it would be much cheaper," he replied, showing that the first ray of the beauty of the home circle had not penetrated his active mind. How can it be otherwise when woman, the heart and life of the family circle, was in his mind because of inherited ideas relegated to the position of prisoner and slave rather than to that of companion and helpmeet? "It was Islam that forever withdrew from Oriental society the bright, refining, elevating influence of woman by burying her alive behind the veil and lattice of the Harem."

Arabic poetry and literature is generally very uncomplimentary to woman, characterizing her as a donkey, or even a snake. The majority of the men hoot at the gallantry and courtesy which Anglo-Saxon etiquette demands of men towards women. Says an Egyptian, "Our women must be beaten in order to be made to walk straight." And beaten they are for trifling offence by father, husband, brother, or son as occasion demands. This custom is so common that the women themselves expect a whipping occasionally.

It has been said that the theology of Islam does not give woman a place in heaven, but that statement is incorrect. However, her place and station in heaven seem to depend entirely upon the will of her husband. Many husbands are like the old Moslem sheikh who said, "I don't want my wives in heaven. I prefer the Harem of beautiful, pure, clean angels which God has provided for every good Moslem." The privilege of prayer is practically denied a young woman with children because of the strict regulations of washing before prayer. Unless these ablutions are done carefully according to rule, prayer is void. A few old women do pray.

The nominal Christians dwelling in the midst of Islam, though they hate Islam with all their hearts, have yet imbibed much of their spirit in regard to the treatment of women. A Coptic priest was heard to say, "It is better for the women not to go to church, for they can't keep quiet. They will eat

and chatter during the service." Poor things! What else could they do, shut off from the main audience room as they always are behind a high lattice screen, where they can neither see nor hear what is going on!

Much can be said about the down-trodden condition of Egyptian women. "As a babe she is unwelcome; as a child untaught; as a wife unloved; as a mother, unhonored; in old age, uncared for; and when her miserable, dark, and dreary life is ended, she is unmourned by those she has served." Heaven is a forlorn hope, not because she is denied any of its privileges, but because of the incapability of providing her with enjoyments similar to those promised to the other sex.

It has often been asserted that the institutions of Islam elevated and improved the state of women, but history and true incidents from life go to show that her position was rendered by Islam more dependent and degraded than before.

She is degraded and made servilely dependent by seclusion. The veil and lattice of the Harem are both Islamic institutions established by the Prophet of Islam and founded upon incidents which occurred in his own family; and they are certainly a faithful commentary upon the sensuality and lewdness of the times, with an unconscious recognition of the fact that the religion of Islam was not of sufficient moral force to improve the times. History has verified this testimony and we only need to look

around in these countries to see for ourselves that Mohammedanism, as its founder anticipated, has not improved the morality of those who have embraced its principles, but has rather excused and given license to all sorts of lewdness. It is difficult for people reared in Christian lands to have any conception of the laxity of morals in Mohammedan lands and it is a thing to be wondered at and excused only on the grounds of ignorance of existing conditions that English parents will allow their young daughters to become resident teachers or governesses in rich Mohammedan houses.

The whole system of Islam, in so far as it concerns family life and the treatment of women, is vile and revolting. The veil and lattice of the Harem, even though established to guard her modesty and purity, have degraded and debased her by making her a prisoner.

As a child, she has before her only a few short years in which she has an opportunity to go to school and the effort to improve those few years is very often fruitless, because just as she shows any signs of budding womanhood (as early as at the age of ten years and not later than thirteen years) she must lay aside her books and "be hidden," as they say in Arabic; then it is considered improper and immodest for a girl to be seen in the streets. Her education stops just at the point when her mind is beginning to open up, and she is learning to love her books. Thrown back into the seclu-

sion of the Harem she soon forgets all she has learned. Should she be energetic enough to try to keep up her lessons and try to get reading matter, she is met with the taunt, "Are you a scribe or a lawyer, that you should read and write every day?"

The girls who have an opportunity of going to school at all are in the minority, but for those who do, as in Christian lands, there is a peculiar fascination and joy connected with the first day of school after a month or two of vacation. Girls, new pupils and old, come trooping into the schoolroom enthusiastic, eager, and bright, rejoicing with all the ardor of childhood that they are allowed to come back to their beloved school and that they are not yet old enough to be "hidden." But there is a strain of sadness in all this joy, for in their interchange of confidences and family bits of news it comes out that a certain Fatima and a certain Zeinab, their big sisters, are sitting at home very sad and even shedding bitter and rebellious tears because, poor things! they have been "hidden" and their schooldays are over.

A day or two after our school began, the teachers and girls were all startled by a rustle of long garments sailing in at the door. On closer observation they soon saw that their visitor was none other than little Habeeba of last year, who during the summer had blossomed out into a woman by donning all the trappings of a Harem lady, and she was truly "hidden," for not a speck of her face showed except one

bright eye. She could not stay away from her beloved school, she said, so had begged special permission to come and spend an hour with her friends.

The seclusion of the Harem is more or less rigid according to the caprice of some exacting husband or mother-in-law. As far as the younger married women's experience goes it is mother-in-law rule literally, for seldom is a man permitted to take his wife to a home of his own. The sons and even the grandsons must bring their brides home to the father's house and all be subject to the mother. A household of fifty is no uncommon thing. Much of the freedom of the younger women depends upon what the old mother-in-law or grandmother-in-law thinks proper. Often she rules with a hand of iron, probably to make up for her own hard life in her younger days, intermixed with an honest desire to preserve and promote the honor and dignity of her house. For the honor, dignity, and aristocracy of a family are often estimated according to the rigor of the seclusion of its women-folk.

Thousands of Egyptian women never step over their own thresholds and many of them never make complaint, only saying, "Oh, you know our men love us very much; that is the reason they imprison us. They do it to protect us."

Among the strictest people a young woman is not permitted to be seen by even her father-in-law. Nor is it allowable for her to be seen by any male servants except eunuchs. Under such conditions it

might be wondered how a woman could keep her domestic machinery in running order, but as one woman said, who had never seen the face of her cook although he had been employed in her house for thirteen years, when asked the question, "How do you tell him what you want for dinner?" "Oh, he knows my wants, but when I wish to give a particular order, I tell the maid servant, she tells the little boy servant, and he conveys the message to the cook!"

It seems like the irony of fate that these women who are kept in such strict seclusion should be so extravagantly fond of society. They welcome in the most hospitable manner any visitors of their own sex. It is pitiful to see how they love to have glimpses of the outside world. A missionary lady tells of a woman whom she often visited, who had never been outside of her house since her marriage, forty years before, and who begged her to tell her something about the flowers, saying, "Ah, you are happy women, free to go here and there and enjoy life!"

Many people who know only the outside of Egyptian life, when they hear that the women have jewelry and beautiful dresses and servants to look after every want, say they are happy and contented in their seclusion, but those who visit them in their homes and talk with them in their own language know how they writhe under it, how they weary of the idleness and monotony forced upon them. One little woman, forced to spend her life behind closed

shutters, would feign illness so as to get an opportunity to call in her friend, the lady missionary doctor, and, when rebuked, would laughingly say, "What am I to do! I must see somebody to pass away the time and I like to have you come to see me, but you won't come unless I send you word I am ill."

It seems part of the nature of the Egyptian to distrust his womenfolk and to believe them capable of any misdemeanor. Therefore they must be carefully watched and kept in check. This distrust reacts upon the nature and character of the women, often making them truly unworthy of trust, but many of them are very sensitive on the subject and feel keenly this unfair position into which they are thrown.

What has been said about the strict seclusion of Egyptian women refers chiefly to the middle and upper classes, for the poorest women, those of the peasant class, have the greatest freedom. They go about unveiled and manifest a character of marked independence and self-reliance, but they are ignorant beyond description, such a thing as books and schoolroom being unknown quantities to them, and their lot is a life of drudgery.

Many of the village women labor in the fields from early morning to late at night, especially during the cotton season, seven or eight months of the year.

During the cotton-ginning season many women

and girls work from 4 o'clock A.M. to 9 o'clock P.M. in the cotton-ginning mills. Those in the vicinities of larger towns are vendors of fruit, vegetables, milk, cheese, and butter. On market days great troops of village women can be seen on the country roads, their wares in big baskets on their heads, their babies perched astride their shoulders, wending their way to town. Those who live in the larger towns are often employed as hodcarriers for masons.

Their powers of endurance are marvellous. It is a common occurrence for a woman to go out to pick cotton as usual in the morning and to come back in the evening, carrying her basket on her head and in it her new-born babe, and it has been known for a woman to start to town with her marketing on her head, be detained an hour or two by the roadside till she gives birth to her child, then with it continue her journey.

Besides being a drudge the peasant woman is nearly always a slave to her husband. Of course she does not eat with him; if she goes out with him she walks behind him while he rides the donkey, which it is her duty to keep moving at a good pace by prodding with a sharp stick. If there is anything to carry she does it. He does manage to carry his own cigarette and walking stick! Often, too, she has to exercise her wits to tell her lord amusing stories for his entertainment as they journey by the way. One day some tourists met just such a couple on a country road. The poor woman

was trudging along with a big child sitting astride her shoulder while its father rode the donkey. The suggestion was made that the child might ride if its mother couldn't. To the credit of the smiling-faced peasant the suggestion was followed.

III

FROM UNDER THE YOKE OF SOCIAL EVILS

UNHAPPY marriages are a natural result of the seclusion of women in Egypt. It would be highly improper for a man to see his bride until after he had married her. He has not even had the privilege of choosing her. His mother did that for him, and it goes without saying that the young man is not always suited. The story is told of a young man who at his wedding feast was sitting so glum and silent that his young friends teased him by saying, "Brother! brother! Why so sad on this joyous occasion?" In answer he said, "I have just seen my bride for the first time and I am woefully disappointed. She is ugly! tall, thin, and weak-eyed." The tall "daughter-of-the-gods-girl" is not admired in Egypt. Her short, fat, dumpy little sister is much more according to Egyptian ideas of beauty. "Cheer up! cheer up!" said his friends, "you are not such a handsome fellow yourself that you should have such a handsome wife!" Shaking his head sadly, he said, "I feel like heaping ashes on my head. If you don't believe me that she is ugly, go upstairs and peep in at the Harem window and see for yourselves." Glad of the chance of such a privilege,

they did so and came back saying, "Brother, heap more ashes on your head!"

Frequent divorce is a natural result of these unhappy marriages. Divorce in any land is a social evil but in Egypt it is especially so, because the divorce laws are such that in a peculiar way woman is degraded by them.

It is difficult to obtain exact figures regarding the percentage of divorce, as all cases are not recorded. There are some who say 50 per cent. of marriages end in divorce, others say 80 per cent., and a prominent Moslem when asked said 95 per cent. An experienced missionary when asked her opinion, said, "Divorce is so common that to find a woman who lives all her life with one husband is the exception."

In fact it is such an exception that it is a subject for remark, and a visitor in a house where such happy conditions exist never fails to be told about it.

Many women have been divorced several times, and a woman of twenty years of age may be living with her third husband.

A native Bible woman who had worked among Mohammedans for fourteen years when asked, "How many men or women of twenty-five years of age she thought likely to be living with their original partners?" said, "Do you mean that they should have kept to each other and that neither has been divorced or married anybody else?"—"Yes." She laughed and said, "Perhaps one in two thousand."

This was probably an exaggeration, but it shows that divorce is very common, and that the percentage is even higher than those who love Egypt and her people like to admit. It almost seems that the history of one's Mohammedan acquaintances in Egypt might be given in an endless stream of incidents about divorce and the intrigue and hate and jealousy attendant on this, the greatest social evil of Egypt.

Many a young man has no hesitation about marrying and divorcing, keeping up the process for a year or so till he at last finds a wife to suit him. If it didn't degrade those he has cast aside, he might be excused for doing so, as he has had no chance to choose his wife intelligently.

A young man of some spirit was determined to have a wife to please him and who would be congenial to him. Seeing no other way to accomplish it, he married and divorced in rapid succession six times. The seventh was a queenly young woman, gentle and refined in all her ways, in whom the heart of her husband might well rejoice, yet the terror daily hung over her that she might be divorced in time like the other six. It was pathetic to see how she tried to cultivate every little feminine art to please her husband, how she tried to improve her mind so as to be a companion to him, but constantly with the fear of divorce lurking in her tender and loving heart.

Among the lower classes marrying and divorcing in rapid succession is a form of dissipation. When

pay-day comes, instead of going off on a big drink (which, to the credit of Islam, is forbidden), they use their money to defray the expenses of a season of debauchery, marrying and divorcing as many wives as possible while the money lasts. Picture the degradation of the poor women who are the victims (often unwilling victims) of such orgies.

It would be interesting to bring in here everything that Mohammedan law says about divorce, but the rules are many and complicated and almost too revolting to put into words. It is enough to say that the husband may divorce his wife without any misbehavior on her part or without assigning any reason. It is all left to the will and caprice of the man, and he has only to say, "Woman, thou art divorced," or he can even use metaphorical language which must be understood by the ever-on-the-alert wife to mean divorce, as when he says, "Thou art free!" "Thou art cut off!" "Veil yourself!" "Arise, seek for a mate!" etc., etc. A certain man had been away for a week or so on a business trip. He came home and the first words he said to his wife, were, "I thought you had gone home to your father's house!" She understood him to mean, and rightly too, "I divorce thee!" so she packed up her things and went off.

If a man pronounce his sentence of divorce only once or twice it is revocable, but if he pronounces it three times it is irrevocable, and the divorced wife cannot be taken back by her husband till she has been

married to another man, has lived with him and been divorced; then her former husband can take her back. This is the most revolting and degrading of all the divorce laws, and the prophet Mohammed instituted it thinking that the very repulsiveness of it would act as a restraint, but strange to say it only seems to give more license.

A man will get into controversy with his friends perhaps. To strengthen his statements he uses all sorts of oaths, the strongest of which is, "I divorce my wife by the triple divorce." It takes legal effect. The poor man is in great distress, for he really loves his wife. What is he to do? He must go through the process of law to get her back. He hires a servant or a strange peasant to marry her. The revolting part is that the poor woman has to live with this hired husband till he is again hired to divorce her, when she is free to go back to her former husband. This case actually happened, and many like it with varying circumstances might be related, although it can gladly be said that the irrevocable divorce is not of such frequent occurrence as the revocable.

Some incidents will illustrate the various circumstances which cause divorce or are excuses for it.

Abraham, the carpenter, came to his employer one day asking for an advance of wages. "Why?" was asked. "I am going to get married," he said, "and it costs much money." Then he proceeded to relate his domestic troubles, how he had lived with

his one wife sixteen years, explaining that he deserved much credit for doing so, seeing that his father during his lifetime had indulged in thirty-nine wives, but that he had come to the point where he must divorce this wife as she really did talk too much, so of course he would have to marry another.

A happy young mother had one little son whom she loved dearly. He was accidentally burned to death. The poor grief-stricken mother mourned and wept so much and so long that she became nearly blind. Because she had no more children, her husband divorced her. In time she talked of marrying again. The missionary who had visited her often and comforted her in her sorrow, remonstrated on the grounds of her former experience. She answered by saying, "A divorced woman must either marry again or else live a life of sin."

A poor little child-wife received such injuries at the birth of her first child because of the ignorance of those who attended her at the time that she became an invalid, consequently her husband divorced her. She heard of the Mission Hospital, where she might receive kindly treatment. She was admitted and cured by an operation. Her husband then restored her to his loving heart and home.

In a certain town there was a little family where there seemed to be plenty of conjugal happiness in spite of so much that is often said about the impossibility of such a thing in a Moslem family. The little wife was beautiful, bright, and intelligent, be-

ing fairly well educated, and was able to make her house into something like a real home. They were blessed with a family of interesting and promising children. The father was wont to boast that he a Mohammedan could verify the fact that such a thing as a perfect home could exist under Islamic conditions. But temptation came his way. He divorced his beautiful unoffending wife to marry the temptress, who though rich and of a high family (which was her recommendation and considered sufficient excuse for his base action), was ignorant and ugly, the only thing which seemed to give him any pangs of regret.

There was a man who was fairly well-to-do and was considered by his neighbors as being very respectable. The first wife was a very nice woman but had no son, so her husband divorced her and married a second. Still there was no son, so he married a third. It was believed he did not really divorce the second wife, but pretended to do so to please the third, who would not consent to being one of two wives. After a while a son was born to the third, and so his first wife was brought back to the house as nurse to the child. She was the most ladylike of the three wives, but she had to carry the baby and walk behind the mother like a servant. When the baby died the parents quarrelled. Number three left the house and went into the country. The husband at once brought back number two, whereupon number three returned in a rage and number two

was turned out of the house. On the next quarrel with number three the man married a fourth time—a girl younger than his daughter by his first wife. About this time he met the Bible woman in the street and asked her why she did not visit his house as usual. She replied, "I do not come because I never know which lady to ask for."

The house of Ali might be supposed to be rather a religious one, for the mother of the family has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and one of the sons is a howling dervish. Here we were introduced to a young bride, wife of a brother of the dervish. Calling again a few months later we found another bride, the one we had seen on our former visit having been divorced. The third time we went the first wife was there again and the second had been divorced. The woman had been married to another man and divorced by him during the short time of separation from the first husband, and when the latter wished to have her back her parents could not agree about allowing the marriage and quarrelled so much that they divorced each other! The time occupied by these proceedings was between a year and eighteen months. Here were six persons concerned, and four marriages and four divorces had taken place. A baby had arrived on the scene, but its parentage was a mystery in the mix-up.

It is quite usual for a woman to be divorced before the birth of her first child, and we could not but feel sympathy with the poor young mother who

under such circumstances called her baby "Vengeance."

Love, the best and most holy of human joys, has been almost strangled to death in Egypt by the institution of divorce, and the family can seldom be considered a community of common interest. As one woman was heard to say, "We go on the principle of trying to pluck or fleece our husbands all we can while we have the chance, since we never know how soon we may be divorced."

It has been said that the character of a nation cannot rise above the character of its women. What can be expected of a nation when hate and jealousy are the ruling passions of its women, of its mothers who nurture and train up its young!

The question has been asked what is the condition of the children of divorced parents. According to the law the mother is given an allowance by her former husband on which to bring up their children to a certain age; then they are his. If they are girls they often are allowed to become servants to the mother's successor, although there are fathers who do have enough natural affection to give the daughters of a former wife the proper place in the house. The allowance given a divorced woman when she has children is most often a mere pittance and too often she never gets one at all. She marries again and the children live with grandparents or other near relations or even alternate between the houses of the remarried father and mother, thus be-

coming mere little street waifs who have no definite abiding place. They certainly do suffer from neglect, but seldom are they victims of deliberate cruelty, although such cases are not unheard of.

The distressing screams of a child once attracted the attention of a family; on investigation it was discovered that the Mohammedan neighbor, who had just brought home a new wife encumbered with her little four-year-old daughter, had been cruelly ill-treating the little mite by shutting her in a dark cellar for hours at a time.

The moral effect of divorce on the children is very bad. They often seem to have an inborn passion of hatred and jealousy. The head mistress of a school for girls said she had often noticed how little gentle affection and love seemed to exist between Mohammedan sisters. These passions are also trained into them, for they constantly hear their parents spoken against and see the jealousy that exists between their mothers and the wives who have supplanted them.

The children of divorced parents, being neglected and not having any settled home, generally grow up in ignorance, because they do not stay long enough in one place to go to school regularly. A school was established in a Mohammedan quarter of a large city with a view to reaching the people in that district, but they were of a class whose social system was in such a constant state of upheaval by divorcing and marrying new wives that it was quite impossible to keep the children in school long enough at a time

to make any impression upon them. When asked why a certain Zeinab had not put in her appearance, "Oh, she has gone to see her mother who lives across the canal."—"Where is Tantaweyah to-day?"—"Gone to stay with her father awhile in another village."—"What can be the matter with Kaleela?" the teacher asks. She knew Kaleela loved school and would not stay away without an excuse, and she knew that her father wanted her to stay in school, but she had a suspicion that the new wife at home had been the means of putting a stop to Kaleela's schooldays. Her suspicion was true, for the new wife's new baby required a nurse.

The institution of polygamy like that of divorce is a natural consequence of the strict seclusion of woman, for it would be unfair to a man to be put under the necessity of taking a wife he had never seen without allowing him some license should he be disappointed in her. In fact, polygamy was the original institution, a relic of the ancient and more barbarous times, Jewish as well as Heathen. By making polygamy a religious institution, the Prophet preserved a relic of barbarism.

Yet even among Mohammedans polygamy is a dying institution. Its death-blow has been struck because educated Moslems are beginning to be ashamed of it and doctors of Mohammedan law are beginning to interpret the law to mean that Mohammed allowed a man to have four wives on the condition that he could treat all alike; and since

human nature makes that condition next to an impossibility therefore Mohammed meant for a man to have only one wife! Many educated Mohammedans in Egypt are taking this position. Among the middle classes the difficulty of supporting more than one wife at a time is decreasing polygamy. But by no means is polygamy an unheard-of thing, even if it is going out of fashion. Fashion is always slow in reaching the country places, and it seems to be in the country villages that polygamy seems to be more generally practised. Two brothers, representative country-men, wealthy and conservative, were known to have very extensive harems, each one having twenty-four wives and concubines.

Many fruitless attempts have been made to defend polygamy and to defend the prophet of Islam for preserving it, but, as a careful student of social and moral ethics has said, "To an ideal love, polygamy is abhorrent and impossible," and when ideal love is impossible to the wife's heart she is degraded because the passions of hate and jealousy will quickly and surely take its place.

The Arabic word which is applied to a rival wife is "durrah," the root meaning of which is "to injure," "to harm." This appellation certainly shows that the fellow-wives are not expected to be on terms of amity with each other.

The most common excuse for taking a second wife "over the head" of the first wife, as expressed in Arabic, is that she has failed to present her

husband with a son. To die without a son would be a great disgrace, so he takes his second wife. A well-educated, pleasant-spoken Moslem sheikh, who was teaching some new missionaries the Arabic language, was just on the point of marrying. Being much interested in the young man, one of the missionaries took occasion to impress upon him some of his moral duties toward his new wife. Among them that he should never take another during her lifetime. "Yes, honorable lady, I promise to do as you say if God is willing and she presents me with a son, otherwise against my will I must take a second."

A missionary lady and a Bible woman were making some house-to-house visits in a little country village. As they were going through the street two smiling-faced women standing together in the door of their hut pressed them to enter and pay them a visit, too. In the course of the conversation it turned out that they were fellow-wives. "Have you any children?" was asked of the older. "No, neither has she," was the quick response indicating her rival with a nod of her head. Their common disappointment in not having any children seemed to draw them together and they seemed more like sisters than rival wives, but if one had a child and the other not there would have been some quarrelling and trouble.

As can be quite easily understood it is rarely possible for fellow-wives to live together in the same

house. In one village there were two houses quite near each other. One was known as the "house of Hassan"; the other as the "little house of Hassan." The former is the family house, and the other is hired by one of the sons for his second wife, the first wife being in the larger dwelling. The quarrels are so incessant that it is difficult for any one to be friendly with both parties, and the second wife is ruining her health with inordinate smoking "to kill thought." She seems very lonely and dull, but says the arrangement is good, for when her husband is vexed with her he goes to the other house, and when vexed in the other house he comes to her, and she added, "If we lived together and he were vexed with both at once, he would have to sleep in a hotel!"

A Bible woman was wont to visit two young women who lived in a large apartment house, on different floors one just above the other. At first they were believed to be the wives of brothers, but they were so much at variance with each other that neither would enter the apartment of the other, so had to be taught and read to separately, much to the inconvenience of the teacher, who could not understand why two sisters-in-law, as she thought, could not meet together to read. She soon discovered that they were both wives of one man and that jealousy was the cause of the disagreement.

Child-marriages have always been considered one of the curses of the East. In Egypt thirteen is about the average age at which the girls are mar-

ried, but one is constantly meeting with cases of marriage at a much earlier age. A woman of twenty-five, prematurely old, seemed to take great delight in telling of her marriage when she was only seven years old, about as far back as she could remember. Another often tells the story how she escaped being married when she was only eight years old. The guests were all assembled, the elaborate supper had been enjoyed by all, the dancing women had been more than usually entertaining; the time for the bridal procession came around, but where was the bride? Her father searched all through the house for her. At last he found her lying asleep in the ashes in the kitchen. His father heart was touched and he said to those who followed him, "See that baby there asleep! Is it right to marry her?" At the risk of bringing great disgrace upon himself, he then and there stopped the marriage and the next day started her off to school. This custom of child-marriage is one of the very fruitful causes of the ignorance of the women.

Ignorance and superstition always go hand in hand and they jointly are both a cause and an effect of the degradation of women in Egypt. Superstition might almost be called the religion of feminine Egypt. The people have many curious beliefs about the influence of the "evil eye" and as many curious charms to protect them from this influence. Many mothers will not wash their children for fear they may be made attractive and thus

fall under the influence of the evil eye. One woman never compliments another woman's child for the same reason. Two women were companions in travel on the train; by way of introducing the conversation, one said to the other, "What is that ugly thing black as tar in your arms?" The other smiling held out her little baby. "Ugh! how ugly!" said the first woman. "Is it a boy or a girl?"—"A girl," said the mother, but it was quite understood that it was a boy. Boys on account of the very high premium put upon them in Egypt are considered to be very much subject to the influence of the "evil eye," so often he is dressed as a girl and called by a girl's name till he reaches the age when he rebels.

The social evils of Egypt are endless, but there is a hope of better things for the future. One of the characteristics of the "New Egypt" is a reaching out after higher ideals. The ideal of the marriage relation is rising, the educated young Egyptian is beginning to claim his right to choose his own bride, thus making the marriage relation more stable because the grounds of compatibility are surer. With this change of ideas on the marriage question and because an educated man would rather choose an educated wife, there is a growing demand for female education.

The evangelical community has the reputation of being the best educated class of people in Egypt. The last census of all Egypt showed that only forty-

eight in one thousand could read. A special census of the native evangelical community showed that three hundred and sixty-five in one thousand could read. The census also brought out the fact that in the evangelical community female education has taken a great step in advance, showing that while in all Egypt only six women in one thousand could read, in the evangelical community two hundred in one thousand could read.

It would be interesting to take a peep into some of the homes of these representative Christian women and see for ourselves how a Christian education has developed those wives and mothers into true home-makers. First let us get acquainted with the dear old grandmother who has just been on a visit to her son and his family who live in our city. She and her son have come to make us a farewell visit before she leaves for her native town. Her feeble voice, her slow step, her dimmed sight, the appealing marks of old age interest us in her. The good-bye kiss and an affectionate pat from her withered old hand draw our hearts to her, the tender filial light in the eyes of her son tells us that this gentle little old lady has been a power for good. After they leave we learn in conversation with those who know the story of her life that she is one of the faithful mothers who has endured much persecution, separation from friends, leaving a home of wealth and influence for one of poverty all for the sake of Christ. The best commentary on her life is

the beautiful Christian home of this son, where his sweet ladylike little wife presides over their family of clean, well-ordered children with all the gentle dignity of a real queen. We are perfectly at home with them, for we see nothing but what accords with our ideal of a real home. Without any previous information it would be easy to know that this home is a Bethel where Christ delights to dwell.

Let us go to a distant town far up the river and visit an old couple who have spent many years in God's service. Their lives are a perfect illustration of what Christ can do for a life. Reared under all the tenets and principles of Islam and not being converted to Christianity till they were mature in years, it might be doubted whether a complete change could be wrought in their lives. It did not come all at once, God works out some of His greatest changes in lives slowly and quietly, a "growing up unto Him in all things." The story of the growth of these two followers of Christ is long and interesting. It is enough to know that they have attained to that point where they can truly be called a "holy temple in the Lord." Their home is a model of Christian happiness where "cleanliness and godliness" dwell together. Their lives are lives of service for their Master. The daughter of this home, a woman of rare beauty, carefully brought up and well educated, is one who although yet young in years has had a marked influence for good in Egypt, first as a teacher in a large girls' school, then as the honored and

much loved wife of the pastor of a flourishing evangelical church. To visit her in her home, to see her in the midst of her little sons and daughters, to join with the family in the evening meal which has been prepared by her own hands, to hear her talk of her work among the women in her husband's large congregation makes one reverently breathe a prayer of thanksgiving to God that He has let us have a glimpse of the possibilities of Egyptian womanhood.

All up and down the valley of the Nile can be found women from this representative two hundred in different stations of life; and each one filling in a womanly way her position. Generally she is a wife and mother, but a true home-maker whether she be the wife of a noble or a peasant. Sometimes she is a servant, faithful, honest, and helpful; often she is a teacher throwing out great circles of influence, which are widening out till thousands of Egyptian women will be reached. Sometimes she is a humble soul who gives herself over entirely to the service of her Master.

Such a one was Safsaf, converted at the clinic. Her husband had cast her off because she was nearly blind. Her great desire was to learn to read. She was presented with a primer and New Testament when she returned to her village after being in the hospital three months. Who would teach her to read? She begged a lesson at every opportunity from those in her village who had a little learning.

No one imagined that she was such an earnest Christian till she soon mastered the reading and after going through the New Testament three times, she began to teach the very ones who had taught her, rebuking them for their sins. They cursed her, saying, "Did we teach you so that you would accuse us!" Her old father learned the truth through her teaching. He then arranged their little hut so that she might hold meetings for women. Her influence among the women and children was wonderful and everybody began to recognize it. Through her efforts a boys' school was started and a capable teacher was secured. The greatest desire of her heart was to have the ministrations of an evangelist in her village. She mustered up courage to go to the meeting of Presbytery and present the request. This was a daring and unheard-of thing for an Egyptian woman to do. But the members of Presbytery were much affected by her pleading and granted her request. The next thing was to get a church; she gave her own little bit of ground, her all, then begged money to build the church on it. In addition to these wider interests, she faithfully and lovingly fulfilled her home duties. Her sister, an ignorant, selfish, and very superstitious woman, was her great trial. This sister became ill, so she took her to the hospital. The doctors told her there was no hope. She begged them to allow her to remain. Safsaf spent days and nights praying for her sister's recovery. She began to mend, and the prayers

of her devoted sister at her bedside that she might be restored so as to have an opportunity to learn of God and become a converted soul, led her to accept Christ as her Saviour.

The life of this humble, quiet-spoken, earnest-hearted, patient, loving woman, who lives close to Christ, is exercising an influence in her native village which even men wonder at, but only God knows how far-reaching it is.

The possibilities of the Egyptian women are great either for good or for evil.

It is said that Ismail Pasha, the grandfather of the present Khedive, who in his day ruled Egypt with a tyrant's hand, was himself ruled by a woman. His mother, a woman of strong character, was the power behind the throne. Much has been said about the downtrodden condition of Egyptian women, and none too much. Islam puts its heel on the neck of woman. It debases and despises her. But there is another side to the picture. Woman was born an invincible spirit, which even the yoke of Islam has not been able to crush. And in Egypt scarcely less than in lands where she is more honored, she exercises a sway that can neither be denied or despised. The lords of creation—and that the men of Egypt feel themselves decidedly to be—yield to their women far more than a casual observer or even they themselves imagine.

An illustration of this is seen in connection with the mourning customs. The government, and in the

case of the Copts, the Church also, has interfered to break up the violent mourning of the women at the time of deaths. Yet very little have they yielded.

This is only one of a thousand instances in which, despite all restrictions, they do as they please. But their influence reaches to far deeper things. They cling to superstitions and a false faith with far more tenacity than do the men. They bring up their children in the same way. It is they who make the marriages for their sons; and they rule their daughters-in-law. They keep many a man from acting up to his religious convictions, and drag many a one back to the denial of his faith. They submit in many things; they are weaker, but it is true that work for women lies at the very foundation of mission work. An Egyptian once said in answer to a statement that the primary object of Mission schools for girls was to lead them to Christ, "If you get the girls for Christ, you get Egypt for Christ."

IV

THE WOMEN OF EGYPT ONCE MORE

"Hasten the redemption of woman . . . by restoring her to her mission of inspiration, prayer, and pity."

—MAZZINI.

WHAT are the women like? Are they pretty? How do they bring up their children? How do they keep their homes? Do you like them? Are they lovable?

Such are a few of the many questions which are put to the traveller and resident in Egypt, by those interested, for various reasons, in the land and its people.

How differently these questions can be answered. The ordinary tourist sees the black-robed figures (with features invisible except for two eyes peering over a black crape veil) walking in the streets of the cities, or driving sitting huddled together on karros,* and he remarks on the discomfort of the costume and the cleverness with which they succeed in balancing themselves on the jolting springless carts. Or again he sees ladies of the upper class driving in their carriages and motor broughams,

*Long narrow carts, the sides of which are only very slightly raised.

BARGAINS IN ORANGES

wearing indeed the inevitable "habarah" and veil,* but the former cut so as to well expose the upper part of the person which is clothed in rich satins and adorned with sparkling jewels, and the latter made in such fine white chiffon and hung so loosely over the lower part of the face only, that the features are distinctly visible; and he marks with a smile the effort made by woman to emancipate herself from customs which deny her the prerogative of attracting admiration to herself.

Again, perchance, he sees the "fellahah" carrying her water jar with ease and grace along some rough uneven track; or, may be, in company with others bearing with agility and strength loads of mud and brick to the builders, measuring her steps and actions to the music of some native chant; and he is

*The former is the black covering worn by all classes. The poorer women make it of two lengths of material two metres long, joined together on the selvedge. The ends of one breadth are sewn up and form the skirt, while the upper breadth is left to pass over the head and fold over the upper part of the person like a shawl. The richer, from the middle class upwards, sew the lower breadth into a band forming a skirt, and the upper breadth is cut smaller to form only a cape fastened on to the waist band at the back, coming up over the head, falling by rights over the whole upper part of the body, but frequently cut so as to scarcely reach the elbow. The latter is worn by the poorer classes; and by many of the older women of the better class it is made of black crape and is tied over the face from just below the eyes and extends to below the waist; by the upper classes and more wealthy it was made in fine white muslin but sufficient to disguise the features. Now it is frequently made in chiffon.

impressed with the idea of her bright existence and her powers of perfect enjoyment.

Again he sees her, whether in city or village alike, following the bier which is carrying all that is left of one who may or may not have been dear to her, and he hears the shrill death wail, and he notes either the bitterness of hopeless sorrow, or the hollowness of a make-belief grief; and he is struck with the demonstrativeness of the women and the peculiarity of the scene, and will try to get a snap-shot of it on his kodak, and then he passes on to things of other interest. Thus the tourist gets to know something of the women, it is true, but all that lies behind these outside scenes is closed to him, and rarely known.

To the British resident the Egyptian woman is usually less interesting than to the tourist. The novelty of her peculiarities and picturesqueness has worn off, and between her and her more fortunate sisters of the West there is a great gulf fixed. Very rarely is an attempt made to bridge this gulf; language and customs apparently form an impassable barrier, and though many English ladies live in Egypt for years, they never enter an Egyptian house, or speak to an Egyptian woman.

It is therefore left to the Christian missionary to know—and to know with an ever widening knowledge—what are the disabilities and what the capabilities as well as possibilities of these daughters of Hagar.

A woman's life may truly be said to have its commencement in betrothal. Before then she is a child, and the days of her childhood are usually spent without any form of restraint whatever. Most of her time, even if she be the daughter of quite well-to-do people, is often spent playing in the streets, where she learns much that is evil and little that is good. The one great reason which many parents give who wish to put their children to school is, "to keep her out of the street, where she plays in the dirt and learns bad language." But whether she goes to school or not the life of a little girl except in school hours is a perfectly free, untrained life in which she learns no morality, not even obedience to her parents. If she does obey them it is from abject fear of punishment, when disobedience would inevitably mean a severe beating. Between the ages of ten to fifteen, usually about twelve and often earlier, the little girl is betrothed and then confinement to the house begins. In one hour her life is changed, no more playing about in the street and acting upon the impulse of her own sweet will, no more for her the child's delight of spending her millième or two at the costermonger's cart and then sitting in the gutter to eat her purchase with face and hands begrimed with dirt; no more for her the joy of paddling in the mud by the street pump, and climbing and clambering about wherever she can with difficulty get. No, she is betrothed now, and her childhood and girlhood are over. Instead of

freedom and liberty, come confinement and restraint. She is not now allowed out of doors except on rare occasions and then in company with older women, and her movements are hampered by her being enveloped in "habarah" and "veil."

Still she has for a time some little comfort in being the important person of the community. She is the bride-elect and there is some excitement in seeing the new "galibeeyahs"* and articles of furniture which are to become her own special property. But then, after a few short months, sometimes weeks, the fatal wedding day arrives, when the child-bride is taken away from her mother and becomes the absolute possession of a man she has often never seen, and knows nothing about. Her woman's life is begun in earnest, and in very stern reality she learns what it is to be in subjection, she learns by bitter experience that she has no power now to do what she likes, and that she is subservient to another.

Her husband may be kind to her, and in many cases is; but in any case she is his slave and utterly dependent on the caprice of his nature. If she herself is fortunate enough to have a man who treats her humanely there are dozens of others living in her quarter who come to see her, who are objects of cruelty and malevolence; and so her mind is fed

* The ordinary dress, cut rather like a dressing gown and made in cotton or silk. If the latter, it is usually elaborately trimmed with flounces and lace.

with histories of intrigue and divorce, of injustice and retaliation, and of unwritten scandal and sin; until she too, alas! becomes contaminated, and often brings down upon herself the just wrath and harshness of one who might have been good to her. History repeats itself: in nine cases out of ten, she can add her tale of woe to the rest.

She bears her children and nurses them, thankful if they chance to be boys; she has no heart nor ability to teach or train them; or joy in keeping them clean and pretty;—she loses two, three, or more in infancy; those who are strong survive and until they are two or three years old, take her place in the streets, where the open-air life and exercise become their physical salvation.

When she is over twenty, she in her turn becomes an elder woman and is to be seen, usually with a young baby in her arms, walking in the streets as she goes the round of seeing her friends, wailing with the mourners at the house of death, weekly visiting the graves of her own or her husband's relatives, and joining in the wedding festivities of those who are going to follow in her train.

What wonder that the Moslem man often cries despairingly: "Our women are all brutish," and has not an atom of respect for her in his heart. In the few cases where a Moslem man speaks well of his wife, and calls her "a good woman," he almost invariably attributes her being so to his own foresight, and diligent insistence in keeping her wholly under

his control, limiting those who come to the house, and not letting her go out of the house even after she has become an elder woman. Between thirty-five and forty she is an old woman with grandchildren, and her life quietly goes down to the grave with all the light and joy long since gone out of it, and with a dark and hopeless future before it. A few illustrations from the writer's personal knowledge will not perhaps be out of place here.

Fatimah had been a day pupil in a mission school for four years. She could read and write well, and sew, and do fancy work. Her father was dead, her brother, for some business expedient, arranged a marriage for her, when she was thirteen, with an old man who had already sons and daughters much older than herself.

He was a head man in his village and lived some distance from Fatimah's home. "Do you think it will be a good thing for Fatimah?" said I to the mother. "What are we to do?" was the reply; "they say he is kind; and far better to marry her to him than to a young man who will only ill-treat and beat her; we are very poor and cannot afford to get a really respectable young man."

The marriage took place, within two months Fatimah had returned home but was induced to go back again, this was repeated twice and on returning home the third time, she made up her mind to get her husband to permanently divorce her. Her mother of course abetted her, and a woman (as pay-

ment for a piece of fancy work she had asked Fatimah to do for her) promised to bring about the divorce by some plan of intrigue which she would arrange.

Fatimah's life is blighted: the best that one can hope for is re-marriage to a poor but respectable man, and to go through her life with him; but the probabilities are she will be married and divorced time after time, and each time sink lower in the social scale. She is not yet fifteen years old.

Aneesah was a little girl of nine, frail and delicate-looking, and an only child and much petted, but often she seemed possessed by the devil so naughty was her conduct. At such times her mother would take her and tie her up, then beat her unmercifully, until the neighbors, hearing the child's screams, would come to the rescue and force the mother to desist. The mother has herself shown me the marks of her own teeth in the flesh of her child's arms, where she has bitten her in order to drive the devil out of her. What is likely to be the future of that child? One shudders to think of it.

Many a time in visiting among the very poor I have sat with the women in an open court, which is like a small yard in the middle of several houses, in which several families own one, two, or three rooms. In the court there may be a dozen or more women, unwashed, uncombed, untidy to a degree; some bread-making, some washing, others seated nursing their babies:—babies who are as sick and unhealthy

as they can possibly be, their bodies ingrained with dirt, their heads encrusted with sores and filth, their eyes inflamed and uncleansed, their garments smelling, and one and all looking thoroughly ill and wretched. It is the rarest thing to see a healthy-looking baby.

As I have sat amongst them and talked with them, I have tried to reason with them and point out the advantages of cleanliness and industry; all admit that I am right and that our habits are better than theirs, yet none have the heart or the energy or the character to break away from their customs and their innate laziness and to rise up and be women.

Yet one can hardly wonder at their condition, what chances have they had? Married at ten or eleven, untrained and untaught, many of them not knowing how to hold a needle, or make the simplest garment; still in their teens with two or three children to burden them, whom they long to see big enough to turn out into the streets and play as they did before them. Their only interest in life, each other's family brawls and scandals; their health undermined by close confinement and want of exercise, is it a wonder that they sink into a state of callousness and indifference about everything?

I have seen a bright-spirited, energetic, laughing, romping girl of eleven, turned in one year into a miserable, lazy, dull, inert woman with her beauty and health gone, and looking nearer thirty than thirteen. One often does not wonder at such a con-

dition of things, rather does one wonder when the reverse prevails, and one is able to realize their possibilities in spite of all their drawbacks. I know of women, though they are but very few, equally poor and unfavored as those I have described, who can be found sitting in their own little rooms, their younger children with them, holding themselves aloof from the usual gossip, their rooms swept, themselves clean and tidy, their babies, though not ideal, comparing favorably with the others; their one apparent trouble, the elder children whom they do not know how to train and whom they cannot keep out of the streets; unless indeed there chance to be a mission school in the near neighborhood.

The same state of things pervades all classes of society, though in the middle and upper classes the Moslems are usually very cleanly both in their persons and in their homes, but the majority of the women are in the same low degraded moral state. Life in the harems is spent in smoking and idle gossip, and things far worse; the wife and mother there, no less than among the poorer classes, has no idea of responsibility. She is frequently unable either to sew, read, or write, and leaves her children to the care of dependents. Her life is merely an animal life; she is but a necessary article for use in her husband's household.

A wealthy merchant who has had several wives keeps one in a beautiful house with every comfort, another wife of the same man is left to live where

she can with the pittance of something like three pence per day. This is what the Moslem faith allows.

It has been well said "a nation cannot rise above the level of its women," and this is painfully illustrated in Egypt and in all other lands where the faith of Islam holds sway. Much is being done to improve the social conditions of the people of Egypt, but the real sore remains untouched so long as the teaching of the Koran with regard to the position of women remains in vogue.

There are many Mohammedan gentlemen who would fain see a better state of things, and who, like the late Mr. Justice Budrudin Tyabji, of Madras, devote their efforts to the amelioration of the backward position of their brethren in the faith, and desire especially the "mitigation and ultimate removal of paralyzing social customs, such as the seclusion of women." But their efforts are unavailing so long as they remain adherents of the Moslem faith, for in obedience to the Koran they can adopt no other course than the present one.

Let them substitute for the Koran the teaching of the Christian faith, the faith which alone gives woman her rightful position, and they will find that she can be a mighty influence for good in the social life of the nation. Let her take the place ordained for her by the Great Creator as the "helpmeet" to man, let her fulfil her mission in the world, laid down in the teaching of the New Testament, to love

and influence, to cheer and strengthen, to pour out her life in the devotion of love and self-sacrifice, whether as daughter and sister, or wife and mother; then will the women of Egypt be clothed with "strength and honor" and then will the daughters of Hagar put on the robe of chastity and the "adornment of a meek and quiet spirit."

"Chastity—
"She that hath that is clothed in complete steel."

Her price will be "far above rubies," the heart of her husband will "safely trust in her," her children shall "arise up, and call her blessed."

V.

BEHIND THE OPENING DOOR IN TUNIS

THE lot of a Tunisian woman is probably a brighter one than that of many of her Moslem sisters who have not the privilege of living under the enlightened rule of a European government.

It is not possible for her, under existing circumstances, to have the perfect liberty of European women, but should justice not be granted by an Arab tribunal, she has always the right of appeal to the French authorities, who take care to see that the laws are rightly administered.

The English-speaking race, accustomed to greater freedom for its women than any other on the face of the earth perhaps, would find it hard to be shut up in an Arab house, taking no long country walks, joining in no outdoor games, knowing nothing of the pleasures of shopping expeditions, having no literary pursuits, and meeting no men outside the circle of their relatives; and indeed it is a sadly narrow life. But we must remember that our Moslem sisters have never known anything better, and the majority are perfectly contented with things as they are. To thoroughly appreciate and make a right use of liberty, one must be trained, there must be education to meet its responsibilities, and without

this its effects would be disastrous. To an Arab lady who never goes out otherwise than closely veiled, it would be a far greater trial to walk through the streets with face exposed, than to the European to cover herself.

Much has been said about the hardships of the woman's being locked in during her husband's absence from the house. This is not infrequent and does appear somewhat prison-like; but it is often done solely as a protection. I knew one woman who preferred to be thus locked in, but arranged with her husband that on the days of my visits the key should not be turned on her. And the doors of Arab houses are always so constructed that, even when locked, they can be opened from inside on an emergency though they cannot be reclosed without the key.

When I came to this country some twelve years ago, the thing that most struck me in visiting Arab houses was the cheerfulness and even gaiety of the women. I had a preconceived picture in my mind of poor creatures sitting within prison walls, pining to get out, and in utter misery.

Nothing of the kind! What did I find? Laughter, chatter, the distraction of periodic visits to saints' tombs, or that centre of social intercourse—the bath. Old women, the scandal-mongers of the neighborhood, go round to retail their news. (And it will be allowed that even in England there are many who take a deeper interest in the doings of

their neighbors than in more elevated topics of conversation.)

Here Jewesses, spreading out their pretty, silken goods to tempt purchasers, or neighbors who had "dropped in" by way of the roof for a gossip, not over a dish of tea, but a cup of black coffee. There Arab women, much like children, quickly shaking off little troubles and meeting greater trials with the resignation of fatalism, which finds comfort in the magic word, "Maktoob" (It is decreed), in a manner incomprehensible to the Western mind.

Is it surprising that I almost accused my fellow-missionaries of misrepresenting the home life of the people? But I only saw the surface and had not yet probed the deep sore of Mohammedanism nor realized the heavy burdens which its system entails.

Let me tell you of three of the heaviest of these burdens: *Polygamy, Divorce,* and the *Ignorance* which results from complete lack of education and walks hand-in-hand with its twin-sister, *Superstition.*

Polygamy shall be placed first, although it is not the greatest bane of Tunisian home life. By Mohammedan law a man is allowed four wives, but in Tunisia, though it is by no means rare for a man to have two, he seldom takes more than that number at one time. Occasionally they live in separate houses, sometimes in different towns, and may be quite unknown to each other. A Moslem will frequently take a second wife in the hope of having

children, or it may be a son, the first wife being childless.

In other houses one finds under the same roof two wives of one husband, each having a large number of children. Each wife will have two or three maid-servants who sit with their mistresses and mingle freely in the conversation, and, if the family be wealthy, the elder daughters have their own special attendants. Thus a household may contain a large number of women who live together more or less harmoniously, and whose numerous quarrels do not conduce to the tranquillity of the master of the house. But what does he care as long as he *is* master and reigns supreme? There is probably not much affection between him and the wife whom he never saw before the wedding-day, but he loves his children, being specially fond of the little ones and showing all a father's pride in his sons. His hours of recreation are spent at the café or the more aristocratic rendezvous—the barber's shop—and the charms of sweet home life he has never imagined.

Year by year, however, Western education is slowly but surely telling on the Oriental mind. The young men, trained in French schools and imbibing modern ideas, show a strong tendency to follow the manners and customs of their teachers, and it is at least considered more "comme-il-faut" to take only one wife and in some measure copy the European "ménage."

Divorce is, however, the great *curse* which blights

domestic happiness, and words fail me to describe the misery it brings.

The Moslem population of the city of Tunis is sixty thousand. Setting aside men and children there remain, roughly speaking, about twenty-five thousand women, and comparing my own experience with that of other lady missionaries we are agreed in affirming that the majority of these women in the middle and lower classes have been divorced at least once in their lives, many of them two or three times, while some few have had a number of husbands. In the upper class and wealthy families divorce is not nearly so common, and for obvious reasons.

I have never known a man to have thirty or forty wives in succession as one hears of in some Mohammedan lands. A man once told my brother-in-law that he had been married eighteen times, and I heard of another who had taken (the Arab expression) twelve wives, one after another; but this last was related with bated breath as being an unusual and opprobrious act.

When a woman is divorced she returns to her father's house and remains dependent on him until he finds her another husband, her monetary value being now greatly reduced. The quarrel which led to the separation is sometimes adjusted and she returns to her husband, but *never* if he has pronounced the words, "Tulka be thaléthe" (Divorce by three, or threefold). This, even though uttered

in a moment of anger, may never be recalled, and if he really care for his wife and wish to take her back again, she must be married to another man and divorced by him before she can return to her first husband. But the laws relating to marriage, divorce, and the guardianship of the children, would require a volume to themselves and cannot be entered upon here.

One is led to ask, what is the cause of this dark cloud of evil which casts its terrible shadow over so many homes?

No doubt it chiefly arises from the low standard of Moslem morality and is intensified by the whole basis of the marriage relationship.

Among the upper classes a girl does not often marry till about seventeen years old, but a poorer man is glad to get his daughters off his hands at a much earlier age, especially if he can obtain a good dowry in payment. The girl goes through a form of acceptance, relying on the representations of her relatives, which are often far from truthful. She never sees her husband until the wedding day and then, no matter how old, ugly, or repulsive the man may be, it is too late to refuse; no wonder that mutual disappointment often ensues, deepening into strong dislike, which produces constant friction, culminating in a violent quarrel; as in the case of a young girl whom I knew, married to an old man, and divorced a few years later through a quarrel over a pound of meat.

The history of the two little girls in the accompanying photograph, shows clearly the contrast between the life of an English and that of an Arab child. It was taken about eight years ago at the birthday party of my little niece, who had been allowed, as a treat, to invite a number of Arab girls to tea, and was photographed with one who was about the same age as herself. The one, Dorothy, is now thirteen years old and still a happy, light-hearted schoolgirl, carefully sheltered from all knowledge of evil. The other, Fatima, to-day, sits in her father's house, divorced, desolate, and soured in temper by her hard fate. And, indeed, her story makes one's heart ache.

Some few months ago she was married to a young man, who, though not yet twenty, had already divorced his first wife. Still, Fatima's parents considered that no drawback, since he was in prosperous circumstances and willing to pay six hundred francs for the charming little bride. The marriage festivities lasted a week, friends showered blessings upon the bride and the bridegroom, who were mutually pleased with each other, and all seemed to augur well for the future.

But, as in the old fairy story, no one had reckoned on the machinations of the bad fairy who soon presented herself in the form of the girl's grandmother. The old lady strongly objected to the match on the ground that a slur was cast on the family by Fatima's being married before her elder sister, Hanani,

DOROTHY AND FATIMAH

who was not so good-looking and had consequently been passed over by the professional matchmakers. She vowed to separate the young couple by "working the works of Satan" over them, which in plain English means, exercising sorcery. But I will tell the story as I heard it from the mother.

Five weeks after the wedding the old woman contrived to steal secretly into the bride's room and sprinkle over it a powder possessing the power of casting an evil spell over those she wished to injure, and, to make her work more efficacious, she further wrapped a knife with evil charms and hid it amongst the bridegroom's clothes. Shortly after she met the young man, and clutching him by the arm, her sharp eyes gleaming from between the folds of her veil, she hissed: "Know, O man, that I have bewitched thee and ere long thou shalt be separated from thy bride!" On entering the house that evening, he complained that he felt as though in a furnace. It was a cold night and the family were shivering, but he kept casting off one garment after another, exclaiming that the awful heat was unendurable and that he was surely bewitched.

This went on evening after evening for a whole week until he declared that he could stand it no longer, and could only rid himself of his sufferings by a divorce. Before the kadi he explained that he had nothing against the girl nor their family, who had always treated him with great kindness, but he was under the influence of sorcery and must be

divorced. And this statement was accepted as perfectly reasonable. What astonished me the most was, that the bride's parents exonerated him from all blame. As the mother said, "I loved him as my own son, but he could not help it." The old woman had worked the works of Satan over him, and how could he escape?

This incident shows not only the slender nature of the marriage ties but also the immense power which *superstition* exercises over the mind. It seems to be part of a Moslem woman's very nature, and largely influences all her life from the cradle to the grave.

Beware, when visiting an Arab woman, of too greatly admiring her tiny baby, however engaging it may be! Such admiration would surely attract "the evil eye," and then woe to the little one! The safest course of an ignorant Roumi (Christian) is merely to glance at her little child and say, "Mabrouk" (May it be blest).

Is there illness in the house, a message is first sent to the "degaz" (soothsayer), who writes a magic paper, encloses it in a leather case, and sends it to the sick one with directions to fasten it on the head, arm, etc., according to the part affected.

Another favorite remedy is to pour a little water into a basin on which passages from the Koran are written, and then either drink or bathe with it as the disease may appear to require.

These powerful remedies failing to restore health,

the invalid is next taken to the tomb of some celebrated "saint." There, offerings are made and prayers recited. A favorite resort in Tunis is the Zawia of Sidi Abdallah, situated just outside the city wall. Here a black cock is sacrificed and a little of its blood sprinkled on the neck, elbow, and knee of the sufferer on whose behalf it is offered.

Before our house stands a Zawia (saint's tomb), built in honor of a female saint, and at this tomb one day stood an Arab woman, knocking gently at the door and crying in piteous tones, "O lady! Heal me, for I am very ill! I have giddiness in my head! I am very weak! Do heal me!" The poor creature calling in her ignorance on a dead saint not only moves the heart to pity but also creates in the mind a wonder as to who these saints may be, and what has led to their being thus honored.

Let me give you a sketch of a noted dervish, or saint, who has just passed away. I first saw Sidi Ali Ben Jaber some years ago seated in front of a café in the Halfouine—the quarter where the late Bey had built him a house. By his side were native musicians making a discordant noise, while at intervals the holy man was bellowing like a mad bull. Securing a corner of a doorstep, I managed to peep over the surrounding crowd and my curiosity was rewarded by the sight of a decrepit, filthy old man, his bald pate encircled by scant grizzled hair and unadorned by the usual fez cap. His sole covering was a dirty cotton shirt, open at the neck and de-

scending no lower than the knees. But what a shirt! As a mark of saintliness, it had not left his body for years, but had gradually increased in thickness, for when sufficiently caked with accumulations of filth and snuff, a clean piece of calico had been sewn over it. This had been covered by successive layers as required, until it is just possible that the initiated might have been able to determine the age of the wearer by the concentric rings of his garment!

Sidi Ali was not always, however, thus seated in state. He would, from time to time, parade the Halfouine, stopping occasionally to demand a gift, which was seldom refused. Stories are told of swift judgments overtaking bold Moslems who slighted the wish of the holy man, and equally thrilling accounts of deliverance from peril to the Faithful who granted his desire.

Sidi Ali Ben Jaber once met another Arab, Sidi Ben Faraji, dragged him into a neighboring shop and insisted on his buying a large and expensive block of marble with which to embellish the "saint's" house, for that happened to be the holy man's craze for the time. On his way home Sidi Ben Faraji had to pass under a bridge, which fell, severely crushing his left arm, and now was apparent the virtue of his gift to the holy man; for had he refused to buy the marble as requested, the bridge would assuredly have fallen, not on his arm only, but on his whole body, and he would have

AN ARAB WOMAN ENTERING A SAINT'S TOMB (TUNIS)

become a shapeless mass. Our "Halfouine saint" was sometimes in a violent state of mind. Then, as he approached, the butchers would quickly hide their meat, the confectioners' display of cakes became suddenly scanty, while other shops appeared equally bare.

The "saint" might enter a shop, turn the contents into the street, and work general havoc; the owner not daring to say him nay, but cherishing the hope of recompense in Heaven to atone for present loss. In cases of illness, Sidi Ali would be taken to the house of the sick one, and his presence was said invariably to bring blessing and relief.

He is also said to have foretold the introduction of electric trams, but this appears to have been only thought of when they had already made their appearance in the city.

For months the poor old man had been growing feebler, and in the month of January last he passed away. His death caused general mourning and lamentation, many women weeping bitterly. The corpse was escorted to the mosque and thence to the cemetery by various sects displaying colored silk banners, emblazoned with Koran verses. Crowds pressed round the bier fighting for a chance of seizing it for a moment and thus securing "merit" in heaven, and it was only a strong force of police which prevented the whole being upset. Fumes of incense filled the air, dervishes swayed in their wild chants till one and the other fell exhausted, and

when the tomb was finally reached the bier was broken into fragments and distributed amongst eager claimants from amongst the thirty thousand Moslems assembled.

Such, dear readers, is a Moslem saint, and their name is legion. It is by the intercession of such as these that the superstitious hope to obtain earthly and heavenly benefits, and it is at the shrines of such as these that the poor Moslem women come, in the dark days of trouble, to pour out their hearts and seek for help and blessing.

Some time ago one of my schoolgirls asked me to go and see her sister, who had been brought from a neighboring village seriously ill. On reaching the house I found a young woman of about eighteen stretched on a mattress on the floor, and sitting by her side, her husband, who was at least fifty years of age. The poor creature was in great suffering and evidently too ill for any simple remedy, so I called in the help of a French lady doctor, who kindly came and prescribed for her.

On going to the house next day, great was my surprise to find that the medicine ordered had not been given, and the surprise gave place to indignation when I discovered that the family firmly believed that the whole trouble was caused by an evil spirit which had taken possession of the young wife, and that the black sheep, tied up in the courtyard, had been placed there in the hope that the demon would prefer to inhabit the body of the animal and

might thus be induced to leave its present abode. Poor young thing! She died not long after, but her friends to this day believe that they did all in their power to help her, and her death could not have been averted since it was surely *decreed.*

The veil that shrouds the Moslem home life in Tunis has been raised and my readers have had a peep at its sadder side, but it is only a peep! The farther one penetrates the more intolerable its noisome atmosphere becomes. Deceit and lying are so prevalent that a mother questions the simplest statements of her own son, and I have seen a mistress insist on a servant swearing on the Koran before she would accept his word. Demoralizing conversation is freely indulged in before the children, till their minds become depraved to such an extent that in our school we could not allow the girls to tell each other stories or even ask riddles because of their indecent character; and bad language, even from the little ones, was a thing with which we constantly had to contend.

And now we, to whom God has given so much light and so many privileges, are brought face to face with the problem, What can be done to help our Mohammedan sisters to lift the burdens which mar the happiness of so many lives?

In the first place it seems to me a necessity that the *man's* eyes should be opened to see the true condition of affairs from a Western, or better still a *Christian,* standpoint, and should realize the larger

amount of domestic happiness he, himself, is losing. And this may be done by education and the free intercourse with Christian families, which will give him an insight into the joys of their home circles.

As was before hinted, European education is already cultivating the intelligence of the upper classes and slowly extending its leavening influence among the masses. There is an increasing desire, not only that the boys should receive a good French education, but that the girls should share its benefits too. Tennyson's words in the mouth of King Arthur have a new significance:—

> "The old order changeth, giving place to new,
> And God fulfils Himself in many ways."

But this change cannot be accomplished in a day, nor without a struggle between the old and new systems. This may be illustrated by an amusing scene I once witnessed.

I was one day sitting in the house of a wealthy Arab whose mind had been enlarged by travelling in many lands. His eldest daughter was one of the very few Arab girls I have met who could read and write Arabic beautifully. I was accustomed to give her French lessons, and she was at that moment in the opposite room across the courtyard, taking a lesson from a Jewish music master on a new piano lately sent by her fiancé.

Suddenly two servant girls rushed into the room exclaiming: "Sidi Mohammed is coming! Here

is Sidi Mohammed!" The grandfather, the head of the family, was at the door, and great would be his wrath should he see his granddaughter learning music, and above all from a *man.* Fortunately the old gentleman, being somewhat infirm, could not quickly descend from his carriage although assisted by his two men-servants, so that by the time he made his appearance the music master was simply hidden away in a tiny inner room and the whole family assembled in the courtyard; ready with profuse salutations, welcomes, and kissing of hands, to conduct him to one of the principal apartments, *not* that in which the Jew was imprisoned. I have often wondered how long the visit lasted, and whether the musician was as fortunate as myself in being soon able to beat a retreat.

Yes! the people are ripe for education—but is there not a serious danger in giving them education and education *only?* Is it not to be feared that with minds enlightened to see the errors of Mohammedanism, they will cast off its bonds only to become entangled in the meshes of atheism and become a nation of "libre-penseurs," so that having escaped the rocks of Scylla they find themselves engulfed in the whirlpool of Charybdis?

My second illustration represents a poor Arab woman entering a saint's tomb, over the portal of which is written: "He (God) opens the doors. Open to us (O Lord) the best door!" And with my Christian readers I would plead that they would do

all in their power both by prayer and by effort, that while the doors of education and progress are being thrown wide to these Moslems, the best door—the door of the Gospel—may be opened also, so that they too may know the glorious liberty wherewith Christ hath made *us* free.

VI

"NOT DEAD, ONLY DRY"

"It is useless to plant anything: the earth is dead."

"No, it is not dead, it is only dry."

"But I tell you, it is dead. In summer the earth is always dead: see here." And the Arab who spoke stooped and picked up a rock-like clod, that he had hewn with his pickaxe from the trench at his feet. It looked dead enough certainly; the Algerian soil in August is much the same in texture as a well-trodden highway. But it is only waiting.

"It is the very same earth that it is in winter," I replied; "all it wants is water, and water you must give it."

With an Oriental's laconic patience, though all unconvinced, the man went on with the digging of his trench, and the planting therein of acacia clippings to make a new thorn hedge where it had been broken down.

And with a new hope in God my own words came back to me as I turned away. "It is not dead: it is only dry."

For of all the soils in the world our Moslem soil in Algiers seems the most barren, while friend and foe repeat the same words: "It is useless to plant anything: the earth is dead."

But in the face of both—in the face of the hosts of darkness who take up the words and fling them at us with a stinging taunt—we affirm in faith:

"No, it is not dead. It is only dry."

Dry: that we know sorrowfully well; it cannot be otherwise. It is dry soil because Islam has come nearer doing "despite to the Spirit of grace" than any other religion; it is, as has been truly said, the one anti-Christian faith, the one of openly avowed enmity to the Cross of Christ, the one that deliberately tramples under foot the Son of God.

It is dry also because in the religion itself there is something searing, blighting, as with a subtle breath of hell. This is true of the lands where it has laid hold, and true of the hearts,—it is dry.

Dry soil, NOT dead soil. If you were out here in Algiers and could see and know the people, you would say so too. The next best thing is to bring you some of their faces to look at that you may judge whether the possibilities have gone out of them yet or not: women faces and girl faces, for it is of these that I write. Will you spend five minutes of your hours to-day in looking—just looking—at them, till they have sunk down into your heart? ARE they the faces of a dead people? Do you see no material for Christ if they had a chance of the Water of Life? These are real living women, living to-day, unmet by Him.

To begin with, the first glance will show their in-

TYPES IN TUNIS AND ALGIERS

telligence. Get an average ignorant Englishwoman of the peasant class to repeat a Bible story that she has never heard before. She will dully remember one or two salient facts. Go up to a mountain village here and get a group of women and talk to them, and choose one of them to repeat to the others what you have said. You will feel after a sentence or two that your Arabic was only English put into Arabic words; hers is sparkling with racy idiom. More than that, she is making the story *live* before her hearers: a touch of local color here—a quaint addition there. It is all aglow. And this a woman who has sat year after year in her one garment of red woollen drapery, cooking meals and nursing children, with nothing to stimulate any thoughts beyond the day's need.

And their powers of feeling: do their faces look as if these have been crushed out by a life of servitude? Not a bit of it. No European who has not lived among them can have any idea of their intensity: love, hate, grief, reign by turns. Anger and grief can take such possession of them as to bring real illness of a strange and undiagnosable kind. We have known such cases to last for months; not unfrequently they end fatally; and more than one whom we have met has gone stone-blind with crying for a dead husband who probably made things none too easy while he lived.

And then their will power: the faces tell of that too. The women have far more backbone than

their menkind, who have been indulged from babyhood; their school of suffering has not been in vain. In the beautiful balance of God's justice, all that man has taken from them in outward rights has been more than made up in the qualities of endurance and sacrifice that stand, fire-tried, in their character.

And down beyond these outward capacities, how about their spirit-nature? It may be hard to believe at home, but it is a fact that just as the parched ground of August is the very same as the fertile earth of spring, so these souls are the very same as other souls. God is "the God of the spirits of all flesh." "He hath made of one blood all the inhabitants of the earth." For IMPRESSIONABLENESS on the Divine side, they are as quick as in enlightened lands: I think, quicker. It is only that as soon as the impression is made "then cometh the devil" with an awful force that is only now beginning to be known in Christian countries, and there is not enough of the Holy Spirit's power to put him to flight. There will be when the showers come!

As yet the soil is dry: the womenkind are a host of locked-up possibilities for good and sadly free possibilities for evil.

The dark side lies in untrueness born of constant fear of the consequence of every trifling act, moral impurity that steeps even the children—wild jealousy that will make them pine away and die if a rival baby comes. Their minds are rife with superstition and fertile in intrigue.

And while all this has full play, unchecked and unheeded, the latent capacities for serving God and man are wasting themselves in uselessness, pressed down by the weight of things. There is something very pathetic in watching the failing brain-power of the girls. Until fourteen or fifteen years they are bright, quick at learning; but then it is like a flower closing, so far as mental effort goes, and soon there is the complaint: "I cannot get hold of it, it goes from me." Once grown up, it is painful to see the labor with which they learn even the alphabet. Imagination, perception, poetry remain, and resourcefulness for good and evil, but apart from God's grace, solid brain power dies. Probably in the unexplored question of heredity lies the clue; for at that age for generations the sorrows and cares of married life have come and stopped mind development till the brain has lost its power of expansion as womanhood comes on. Life is often over, in more senses than one, before they are twenty.

The story comes before me of three warm-hearted maidens who a few years ago belonged to our girls' class: the eldest came but seldom, for she was toiling over shirtmaking for the support of her mother and sister. This sister and a friend made up the trio.

Their mothers were "adherents"—we had hoped at one time MORE than adherents, but compromise was already winning the day: the daughters had

open hearts towards the Lord, all of them in a child-like way.

Where are they now?

They came to marriageable age, and Moslem etiquette required that they should marry. We begged the mothers to wait a while and see if some Christian lads were not forthcoming: but no, fashion binds as much in a Moslem town as in the West End of London.

The eldest girl was carried out fainting from her home to be the wife of a countryman. He was good to her: his mother became madly jealous. Within two years the bride fell into a strange kind of decline; when death came there were symptoms showing that it was from slow poison.

The second to marry was the little friend. At her wedding feast those who had forced the marriage on, drugged her with one of their terrible brain-poisons. The spell worked till she could not bear the sight of us, and hated and denounced Christ.

It wore itself out after a few months and light and love crept back. We went away for the summer. Before we returned she had been put to death by her husband. Through the delirium of the last day and night her one intelligible cry was "Jesus"; so the broken-hearted mother told us. She was an only child.

The third is still alive, a mere girl. She has been divorced twice already from drunken, dissolute hus-

bands. Long intervals of silent melancholy come upon her, intense and dumb, like threatening brain-trouble. She was playful as a kitten five years ago.

Poor little souls—crushed every one of them at sixteen or seventeen under the heel of Islam. Do you wonder that we do not consider it an elevating creed?

And yet they have gone under without tasting the bitterest dregs of a native woman's cup; for (save a baby of the eldest girl's who lived only a few weeks) there were no children in the question. And the woman's deepest anguish begins where they are concerned. For divorce is always hanging over her head. The birth of a daughter when a son had been hoped for, an illness that has become a bit tedious, a bit of caprice or counter-attraction on the husband's part—any of these things may mean that he will "tear the paper" that binds them together, and for eight francs the kadi will set him free. This means that the children will be forced from the mother and knocked about by the next wife that comes on the scene; and the mother-heart will suffer a constant martyrdom from her husband if only divorce can be averted. The Algerian women may claim the boys till seven and the girls till ten or twelve; the countrywomen have no claim after the little life becomes independent of them for existence.

Look at the awful and fierce sadness of this face: more like a wild creature than a woman.* She has

* See illustration opposite page 294.

probably been tossed from home to home until she is left stranded, or wrecked on rocks of unspeakable sin and shame: for that is how it ends, again and again.

Turn from her: we cannot have her to be the last. Look once more at a girl, untroubled as yet. If you want to see what the women could be if but the social yoke of Islam were loosed from their shoulders, study the little maidens upon whom it has not yet come. Take one of them if you can get hold of her—even a stupid one, as this one may be with all her soft grace—let her expand for a few weeks in an atmosphere of love and purity. Watch the awakening: it is as lovely a thing as you could wish to see, outside the kingdom of God.

And if this budding and blossoming can come with the poor watering of human love, what could it be with the heavenly showers, in their miracle-power of drawing out all that there is in the earth that they visit. Oh the capacities that are there! The soil is "only dry."

And in the very fact of its utter dryness lies our claim upon God. "I will make the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing," is His promise. The "season" for the showers in these southern lands, is the time of utmost drought. It is not in July when the gold lingers in the grass, but in September when the tangle of the spring has sunk to ashen gray, ready to crumble at a touch—it is then that we know the rains are

A YOUNG GIRL OF THE ABU SAAD TRIBE

nearing. God's "season" comes when all has gone down to despair.

So we look round on our Moslem field, and triumph in the dryness that is so like death, for it shows that we need not have long to wait.

But a great fight is fought overhead in the natural world out here before the rains are set free: the poor dry lands seem to wrestle against the one thing that they need. Before the clouds burst there will come days—weeks, perhaps, off and on—of fierce sirocco, hurling them back as they try to gather. Sometimes they seem on the point of breaking, and a few drops may get through the heavy air, then back go the clouds, leaving the brassy glare undimmed. On the fight goes, and gets only harder and harder, till suddenly the victory is won. The south wind drops, or shifts to the west, and the clouds, laden now with their treasure, mass themselves in the east; then the wind wheels to the east and gets behind them, and in an hour or less, unresisted, they are overhead; unresisted, the windows of heaven are opened, and the rain comes down in floods with a joyful splash, drenching the earth to its depths, and calling to life every hidden potentiality.

A fight like that lies before us in the lands of Islam. It has begun even now; for we have seen again and again the clouds gather and swept back, leaving a few drops at best, and these often quickly

dried. They are not yet full of rain, so they do not empty themselves upon the earth.

And it is not from this side that they can be stored: it is not the thirsty earth that can fill them. They travel from afar, where ocean, river, and lake can breathe their vapors upward, swept unseen by the wind that bloweth where it listeth, to the parched places. We need you, in the far-off, Spirit-watered lands to store the showers. You may be but a road-side pool, but your prayer-breath may go up to be gathered in God's clouds and break in His "plentiful rain." When the clouds are full He will still the sirocco blast of evil that fights it back, and it will come down with the sudden swift ease that marks the setting in of the rains here, year by year.

Do we believe that each heaven-sent prayer brings the cloud-burst nearer? That one last cry of faith, somewhere, will set it free? Do we act as if we believed it? Shall we give ourselves to hasten it?

And when it comes, we shall see the latent possibilities awake, and the latent powers assert themselves, and the people of Moslem countries, men and women, show what they can be and do for Him and in His kingdom. For, thank God, they are not dead lands, they are "only dry."

VII

LIGHT IN DARKEST MOROCCO

THE factors in a Moorish woman's life are largely those of her Moslem sisters everywhere; excepting as exaggerated by the absence of all English or French influence. In Morocco we have the rugged path Mohammed allotted their sex painfully adhered to, and any European influence of other lands conspicuous by its absence. The lack of education, inability to read, undeveloped powers of thought handed through the generations of thirteen centuries, are at least not lessened by time or weakened by heredity.

The families in which daughters are allowed to read are few and far between: just an occasional one among high-class government officials, or a favorite daughter here and there who is destined to support herself and relatives by teaching the few privileged to learn among the rising generation. The little girl is seldom welcomed at birth. It is a calamity she was not a boy. A few years of half-freedom for the town-child and hasty neglect for the village maiden. Many a better-class woman enters her home as a bride, in the carriage which so carefully conceals her, and sees but four white-

washed walls for the remainder of her days, nor leaves their monotony until carried out in her coffin. What uplifting or educating influences does the bare windowless abode (opening only to the central court of the home) exercise? We hear betimes of the wish to remove the veil and allow more liberty to woman. In Morocco she is hardly ready for the change, but needs educating and preparing, ere, with propriety and true modesty, she can take her rightful place.

Divorce is fearfully common and easy. Plurality of wives is an awful curse. The chief features of home-life are quarrels, intrigues, attempted poisonings, and rankling bitternesses.

Slavery is more common than in other countries so near the borders of civilization, and the possession of these human chattels denotes the measure of worldly prosperity. Occasionally they find a kindly master, but, more often, are inhumanly treated and regarded as so much property. We are frequently urged to treat the slave for illness and so increase her market value, while the wife, or wives, may suffer unnoticed and unassisted.

The Moorish woman has little part in religious life. She has no merits or opportunity of attaining such, unless she be a well-known lineal descendant of their prophet. Very few learn the prescribed form of Moslem prayers and fewer still use them. Once and again we find one going through the positions of prayer and accompanying set phrases.

These women are usually the most difficult to deal with and least ready for the hearing of the Gospel. One of them, during a medical visit, drew her prayer mat to a distance lest I defile it and closed her ears with her fingers to shut out my words. Undoubtedly the *very best,* and often *only,* way of reaching them is through the dispensary.

Their lives centre largely round the three annual feasts, in preparation for and enjoyment of them. Every birth, circumcision, wedding, death, and even serious illness, is an opportunity, for those allowed sufficient freedom, to receive and pay visits, feast, enjoy the accompanying minstrels, appear in their most gorgeous dress and criticise that of others. Meanwhile they engage in empty and profitless conversation, which too often passes into the injurious both for body and soul, of young and old, hostess and guests. Much attention is paid to fashion, and Moorish etiquette is not to be lightly treated or easily fulfilled.

Some of the women figure in the weird orgies of religious sects of a private and public character. Their wild, dishevelled, and torn hair is prominent in the Satanic dance of the Aisowia Derwishes, and they vie with the men in its frenzied freaks, falling finally exhausted to the ground, unable to rise. But this class fortunately is not numerous. I was visiting in one of these houses last year in Fez. The occupants were strangers and had come pleading me to relieve one in very acute pain. The atmos-

phere of the room hung heavily over me, I knew not why. Taking my colloquial Gospel, I spoke of Christ and asked to read. A blank refusal was the answer. Then the storm broke and during my second visit I had to rise and leave, asserting my union with Christ and the impossibility of having me or my drugs without the message of my Master and Saviour. They have since been, when the violent pain returned, pleading for relief, but not again inviting to their house. Such uncanny sense of the immediate presence of the evil one, I have never experienced, as when under their roof, nor would wish to again. It was an intense relief to breathe freely in the open air afterwards. Yet two of our recent converts, and one of them among the most promising, have belonged to these followers of Satan! Their wild hair is now neatly braided and they are clothed and in their right minds, sitting with their converted sisters to learn more of Jesus and lifting up voices in prayer to Him.

Female slaves, from the far Soudan, are betimes among our bitterest and loudest opponents during Gospel teaching. They have more courage than their mistresses and are more outspoken. Yet, even among them, we have seen notable changes. One, exceptionally well-taught and able to quote the Koran, met me first with loud contradiction in her Fez home. Frequent attendance at our medical mission wrought a marvellous change. Open opposition first ceased. Then an awakening, and at

A BEDOUIN GIRL FROM NORTH AFRICA

least intellectual, acceptance of the vital truths of Christianity and readiness to explain them to newcomers. When she had to follow her master to the south, we were conscious of losing a friend and helper. She took with her a Gospel and was followed by our prayers.

Classes for sewing, reading, and singing are important factors as means of reaching the women and girls. The first of my four years at the Tulloch Memorial Hospital, Tangier, brought me in contact with a most interesting woman. Many years she had been under Mrs. Mensink's teaching and otherwise had known the missionaries. A gradual awakening was manifest, until, during that year, when ill with pneumonia, I found her apparently trusting Jesus. One difficulty haunted her, she was ignorant, could not even read, and her teachers told her Jesus was not the Son of God;—must they not know best? A few days before her death she joyously told me of a dream she had had and assured me her last doubt had gone. In it Jesus appeared to her and proclaimed Himself the Son of God. No after-cloud damped her joy. The death-bed was that of a consistent Christian. Her relatives would not own it and buried her as a Moslem in their own cemetery, with her face towards Mecca.

This year, in one of our inland cities, not a few members of sewing classes have simply trusted Christ for salvation and now meet for prayer and instruction with their leaders. A native women's

prayer meeting has been formed, where each of these new converts takes part and learns to pray. Several also have been led to Jesus through the medical mission and the visitation of their homes.

An instance of earnest simplicity in prayer occurred in our own home. We had spoken to a convert about prayer. She said, "I am too old to learn and too ignorant!" The following day when asked, she replied: "Oh, yes, I prayed this morning." "And what did you say?" "Well, I did not know at first, but then repeated the only prayer I knew, the first chapter of the Koran, and at the end added, 'in the name and for the sake of the Lord Jesus,' and I thought *He* would understand it and fill in for me all I had been mistaken in or unable to tell Him." He truly did so, for since that time the dear old woman has learned to pray. Grasping my hand after one native prayer meeting, she said, "Oh, to think of it! three of us praying together in the name of Jesus; three of us believing in Him." These were, her married daughter, an only son, and herself. One of these converts of last spring had typhus fever a few months later and passed into the Presence of Him whom she had learned to love. Another is nearing her end and wonders why He tarries so long in coming to take her to be with Himself.

One day's journey from Tangier on mule-back, lives the first woman I ever heard pray; consistently she seeks to tell others the little she knows. A lady

missionary, since departed, lived with her a fortnight in the early days of the North African Mission. She dates her conversion from that time and, without any resident missionary since, dependent only upon the teaching of a few days or weeks during an itinerating visit, she still knows and can explain to others that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." Nearly all of this year's numerous converts are the result of much seed-sowing and the patient labors of long years past, now gathered by prayer into the fold. Not a few of the sowers have passed to their reward without seeing the harvest which should be.

We have found medical work a powerful handmaid to awaken interest in the Gospel story. To our great grief, however, the continued political unrest, due largely to the presence of the Pretender and rising of the tribes from time to time, during the past four years, has almost closed up this highly useful evangelistic and Christ-like work.

The Northern rebellion would have ceased long ago had the present Sultan honest and energetic soldiers and leaders. Few, however, are impervious to foreign gold; and no one trusts another, unless he pay well for the interest in his affairs. The Sultan is a pleasant and enlightened person, but unable to cope with the surrounding lawlessness single-handed. Many a tale of bribery and wrong reaches us. The wild tribes know no other fear than that of seeing turbulent skulls and rebellious

heads hanging upon the city gates. We went down to Fez four years ago, a few weeks after the violent and sad death of our dear friend and brother, Mr. Cooper. His only crime in the eyes of the violent tribesman, his murderer, was that of being a foreigner. Two weeks after our arrival in the city, Consuls ordered foreigners to the coast. We had to obey. Six weeks were spent in Tangier and then again we returned to our scene of labor, the large out-patient dispensary which treated over eleven thousand cases last year and so reached between two hundred and one hundred and fifty with the Gospel on Women's mornings, every day.

Two years ago orders again came to pack up and prepare for emergencies. The storm blew over and since then the main roads have been practically safe for ordinary traffic and merchandise. Even the foreigner can securely take his place in any caravan without fear of ill.

Raisuli's capture of European and American citizens for hostages alarmed many, but he had sought the Government's recognition of his lawful Kaidship, and when refused, wrongly determined to claim the same by force. The strong hand with which he now controls those wild tribes under his jurisdiction, proves his ability to govern. His justice, if semi-barbarous, is certainly ahead of that of most of his fellow Kaids. He reversed the decision of a Moorish tribunal which had wrung from a poor widow her lawful property, restoring that which

had been unlawfully taken. A few such men in the highest circles would soon bring order out of chaos and strength to the throne. The English missionary has had the great advantage of being favorably received by the people on account of his or her nationality. It stood, to them, for integrity, strength, and honor. Whatever changes may have taken place during the last four years to lessen this trust in her, England has still much favor with the majority. Hers were the pioneer-missionaries, for where no man would have been trusted or allowed to reside, her lady workers penetrated. Before any resident Consul, Miss Herdman and her companions went to Fez and commenced medical work. She won her way into the hearts of the people and is still lovingly remembered. It was her work which Mr. Cooper had taken up for a few short years, when so suddenly snatched from it by a lawless fanatic's hand. The seed sown thus long and faithfully has lain dormant. Just a few, one here and there, gathered into the fold; native converts prepared for colportage work; the building of a foundation on the Rock Christ Jesus. But to those who followed her has been granted to see the increase, and begin to reckon, even, on the "hundredfold."

The coast towns have ever been more accessible to the foreigners; yet alas, where the foreigner is LEAST known the native is most receptive, courteous, and hospitable. The average colonist, or even tourist, seldom recommends the Kingdom of God,

and the native points to the drink traffic, so opposed to his religious views, and asks how that is included in the Christian country's commerce and consumption!

Thus, the farther removed from *such* Christian influence the greater the freedom for Gospel work. Tangier was first opened; Hope House being a partial gift to the North African Mission.

At first both men and women were treated here, but the great desirability of conforming to Moorish rules of life led to the opening of a Women's Hospital in the town. Here I did one year's out-patient work during the absence of the efficient and indefatigable lady doctor—Miss Breeze—in England. These were largely the ploughing, seed-sowing days. Since then several have professed conversion. One, on returning to her village home, was bitterly persecuted and finally, to escape death, had to flee by night to her former teachers and with them find refuge. Some four or five of the elder girls in the Moorish orphanage came out boldly on the Lord's side. The teaching of girls has been a prominent feature of the work in that city.

Larache, two days down the coast by mule, was permanently opened many years later, some medical and class work being done, with house to house visitation. Mr. and Mrs. Taylor, our Scotch friends, are independent workers here.

El Kaar, six hours inland from Larache and two days from Tangier by mule, is worked from the

former by the North Africa Mission, and five American lady workers of the Gospel Union Mission do good house to house service in that little town. Its inhabitants are unusually genial and receptive; these are days of seed-sowing, for the harvest is not yet. Women's and girls' classes are also held, and prayers are asked for a few already deeply interested. Some very happy days have I spent working among Moorish friends there.

House to house visitation is essentially for the women. They are always "at home," and to them we definitely go since they can so seldom come to us. Classes have already been a prominent feature of the work in Fez, and gather larger numbers than is usual in the other towns. This city of some one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants has been the residence of the Sultan and his court for the past four years. It is consequently very full and affords splendid opportunities, having been so freely opened up by the large medical mission established there.

Early in the year, a mother and her daughter said to me, "We have been loved into HEAVEN, we have seen the love of Jesus in care and healing during our sickness, we take Him now as Savior for our souls." These are living consistently for Him now. Two years ago a prominent theological professor asked me in the street for medicine. I directed him to the medical mission. To the surprise of all he came often, listened quietly from the first, and, ere long, became a decided Christian. His wife, a noble

woman (*sherifa*), is now reading the Gospel with him, saying, "Yes, I believe that which is written, but, oh! I do want to remain a *sherifa!*" Not yet can she count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, her Lord.

In an inland town in Morocco, where a number of women had professed faith in Christ, the question of baptism arose; two were wishing for it. How could they brave its publicity? One woman had been baptized privately in Tangier, few, even of the missionaries, knew beforehand it was to take place—so bitterly were her relatives opposed to the Gospel. The rite had not been publicly received by any Moorish woman heretofore. After some eighteen months of constant teaching in preparation, these two sisters were ready to brave all danger and opposition, and despite all efforts to foil their purpose, passed through the waters of baptism unveiled before the assembled native church and foreign missionaries, and that as bravely and modestly as any Englishwoman would have done. This was a terrible blow to the devil. He had fought courageously to avert the calamity to his kingdom, but God heard continued and earnest prayer that a first public stand be thus taken for Him. The blow has fallen upon the powers of darkness and this great triumph in women's work been gained for Him. They now "break the bread and drink the wine" with their converted husbands and friends "until He come." One of them received such a spiritual

impetus after the step as to make us fearful lest her boldness endanger life. She brought a formerly bigoted relative and said, "Teach her, pray with her, she is near the Kingdom!" And so it proved, for that day she "entered in." When reading the colloquial Gospel of Luke in one of the highest Government houses, the remark was made to me, "Why, this is the book and this the story we heard from Miss McArthur in Morocco city!"

Some of our native colporteurs work with our Scotch brethren and thus is Christian unity cemented. Dr. Kerr and his fellow-workers have a strong medical mission in Rakat and a similar one was carried on by the North African Mission in Casablanca, until the recent death of Dr. Grieve.

Tetuan has long maintained its vigorous outpatient dispensary, successful visiting in the homes, and numerous classes. Mention should certainly be made of the great impetus given to labors among Moorish women by the publication of a Moroccan colloquial version of Luke. With so few female readers, and the majority of men even, insufficiently educated to understand the magnificent classical translation into Arabic, one within the grasp of every man, woman, and child was urgently needed.

Our American brethren have hitherto published only the Gospel of Luke, which has been so well received, but they hope soon to have in print other portions, which are eagerly looked for.

You say, "We have heard only of encouraging

cases, bright prospects, and ingathering; we thought it was not so in Moslem lands and especially among their women." Perhaps it has not been, and even now, only the beginning of early harvest is in the reaping. Thank God, a grand wheat-garnering has yet to follow, and those who have labored longest and seen least fruit will yet divide the spoil. Undoubtedly there are rejecters of the Cross of Christ, and His bitterest enemies are surely under the Crescent's sway. At the same time there is tremendous encouragement for hearts and laborers who can "afford to wait" and have learned to pray.

Only twice in our vast crowded city (though making from six to eight hundred visits in the homes yearly) have I been refused liberty to speak for Jesus and NEVER been denied admittance. There are six sisters in Fez doing this work from house to house, but HUNDREDS of homes await us which we are utterly unable to enter. ONE life is so short where the need is so great, and open doors are on every hand. Most of our fellow missionaries in other stations would plead in the same words. Doors, doors, but how can we enter them? At present the people inland are hardly prepared for the qualified lady doctor. In the bulk of instances where her skill is most urgently needed, she would be refused. Miss Breeze, in Tangier, has patiently labored and trained the women to trust her and submit to the necessary operations.

Away from the coast a similar patience and train-

ing are necessary to prepare the female sex for her valuable assistance. At present the trained nurse has the fullest scope, and the limits of her powers represent the willingness of the people for medical work. Sad, indeed, are those instances wherein a little assistance would undoubtedly save life, but is refused point-blank on the plea "if the patient subsequently died the missionary would be accused of murder." At present, no explanation, no persuasion, can change the fiat. Moorish law, like that of the Medes and Persians, "altereth not." They are, however, very susceptible to the influence of drugs, and the simplest remedies often work cures which by them are regarded as miracles, and faith in the "Tabeeba" is proportionately increased.

Colloquial hymns are much valued and a standard hymn-book would be a great boon. I have taken a small American organ with me and sung and explained the Gospel in bigoted and wealthy homes, where reading it would not have been possible. In two instances, I took a magic-lantern with me, from the slides of which plain teaching was an easy task. Once it was a wedding festival and friends had gathered to the feast. Our hostess had lived some years in England with her merchant husband, but a knowledge of English life, or even ability to speak its language, by no means predisposes to the reception of the Truth. It certainly was not so in the present instance. A few months ago she said to a fellow missionary, "I know the right is with you.

I well know what I ought to do—leave Mohammed and accept Jesus—but this would mean leaving my husband and children—turned out of home and robbed of all! I cannot do it." One sad instance stands for many: a rejected Gospel!

I once attended a wealthy and influential *sherifa* dying of tuberculosis. No English consumptive clings to life more tenaciously than she did. Everything was at my disposal and courtesy lavished until she found there was no hope for her life. Then she bitterly turned from any word of a Life to come and flung herself hopelessly upon her charm-writers and native crudities until past speaking. Her husband took a Gospel, and I heard, sat up into the night and studied its contents. We followed the volume with prayer. To-day news reaches me from the field that he has died of typhoid fever. Oh! to know he accepted its truths!

Sometimes those cases where I have given longest and most frequent medical attention, have finally been least responsive to the story of the Cross. In other instances a single visit awakens interest and the soul goes on into full light and liberty. Several homes I have closely visited and watched, hoping to find an entrance for Christ; but not until some serious illness or other calamity comes are its occupants sufficiently friendly to hear of God's love in Christ. The lady worker and constant visitor in her long white native garment (silham), with veiled face is much safer, humanly speaking, and usually more

acceptable than the foreign worker in European dress. I have even been asked to climb over the roofs into a house within some sacred precincts, where infidel foot may not be known to tread, and one patient was always reached through the stable door, as the main entrance was too near a so-called saint's place. Again I was asked to see and treat a poor sufferer, very ill, in the open street, to avoid standing on their holy ground and defiling the spot.

Probably all I have written is equally true of any Moslem land. The religion of Islam knows no progress and has within itself only the elements of decay. Means for the propagation of the Gospel will scarcely vary. The harem always depends upon the consecrated and tactful sister to reach its inmates from without. These thousands of homes can only be entered by the multiplication of the individual worker a hundredfold.

Now is Morocco's day. A few days later and her opportunity will have passed by forever. Once broken up, or Europeanized in any way, and civilized nations will, perhaps, "fear the propaganda of the Cross and the distribution of the Bible lest fanatics be aroused, holy war proclaimed and bloodshed ensue." At least thus they said when Khartoum was opened to the merchant, and similarly have thought other nations in their respective colonies. They have not yet learned that the converted Moslem is the only one who can be trusted, and the men will largely be influenced by what their mothers and

wives are in the home. They know not as we do, that, in time of war, unrest, and danger, valuables and money are brought to the missionary for keeping, and the place of safety to the native mind is the mission house. To meet, in any degree, existing needs, or use present opportunities for freely distributing and reading the Gospel, teaching its precepts and hastening Christ's Kingdom in "Sunset land," we must strongly re-enforce every station. Increase the number of missionaries working under each mission. Send forth women who have learned how to pray in the home lands to seek these poor sheep and gather them into the one fold and unto the one Shepherd. The commencement of this year's unprecedented blessing among women dates back primarily and supremely to the increased spirit of prayer. At first even all the foreign workers were hardly alive to this, but persistent prayer won them one by one. Then followed the united requests for individual souls, and these too were granted. The Holy Spirit brought us in contact with those hearts within which He was already working, or preparing to work, and as a result the Father was glorified in the Son—souls were saved, and not alone among the angels, but even upon earth and amid the Church militant.

These babes in Christ need daily tending and teaching as little children. The work in the hands of those workers already in the field can scarcely allow any addition, and yet we PRAYED for these; and

now who shall feed them? Not only so, some are still halting between two opinions, reading the Word and needing the loving hand to lead them gently over the line; but this individual care is a big task where women's medical mornings each already bring one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty patients. Surely we shall unite in the prayer to the Lord of the Harvest, that He send forth laborers into His harvest and to some—as we pray—He will answer, "Go ye!"

VIII

MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN IN THE CENTRAL SOUDAN

THE form of Islam seen in the large centres of population in the Hausa States is that of a virile, aggressive force, in no sense effete or corrupted by the surrounding paganism. It has had no rival systems such as Hinduism or Buddhism to compete with, and until now has not come into conflict with Christianity. The distinctive characteristics of the African have, however, tended to increase in it sensualism and a laxity of morals, and this has stamped, to a large extent, the attitude *toward* women and the character *of* women as developed under its system.

Social and moral evils, which may have a thin cloak thrown over them in the East as well as in those lands of Islam in the North of Africa, are open, and boldly uncovered, in the Hausa States.

Most of what is written in this chapter refers to the Hausa women, who form by far the greatest number in this country; but it is necessary to write a few lines first about the Fulani women, who are aliens and of a different social, political, and racial type.

It is now generally acknowledged that these people

—Fulanis—originally came from Asia, or at least are Semitic.

They are the rulers of all this great empire, and have for a hundred years exercised a tyrannical rule over the Hausas and the pagan peoples whom they had succeeded in enslaving before British rule in turn overcame them. The Fulani women are many of them olive-colored; some are beautiful and all have the small features, thin lips, straight nose, and long straight hair associated with the Asiatic. The Fulani rulers, following the Eastern fashion, have large harems and keep their women very secluded.

The late Emir of Zaria was terribly severe to all his people, and cruel to a degree with any of his wives who transgressed in any way or were suspected of unfaithfulness. In one instance in which a female slave had assisted one of his wives to escape, both being detected, the wife was immediately decapitated and the slave given the head in an open calabash and ordered by the Emir to fan the flies off it until next night!

I have been admitted into the home of one such family, the home of one of the highest born of all the Fulani chiefs, saw two of the wives and bowed to them, but the two little girls of seven and eight years came to call on me. On the whole I was struck with the cheerful appearance of the wife and the sweetness of the two little girls, but the husband was a particularly nice man, I should *think* a kind husband. and I *know* a kind father.

I knew one other Fulani lady long after the death of her husband, she being about sixty-five years of age, and a very nice woman in many ways. She told me that her husband, although of good family, had married only her and that they had been happily married for over thirty years when he died, and she had remained a widow. I fear, however, these are exceptional cases and that the ordinary life of the women of the ruling Fulani class is a hard one.

I was once sitting in my compound when a well-covered and veiled woman came to see me, with the excuse that she wanted medicine. After some conversation I found it was trouble that had brought her. She had been for some years loved by her husband but had had no children; so her husband had married another wife and disliked her now, and she wanted medicine from me to make him love her again! She begged me never to mention that she had come to me, saying that her husband would certainly beat her nearly to death if he knew that she had come out, and much more so if he knew she had come to me.

The ease with which all Hausa women, but specially those of the middle and lower classes, can obtain divorce for almost any reason; also the frequency with which they can obtain redress for cruelty from their husbands in the native courts, gives them power and a position in the community not to be despised. A man, for instance, in order to get a girl of sixteen years in marriage will pay

her parents a sum of perhaps ten or twelve pounds. If at any future time she desires to leave him and marry another man, she can do so by swearing before the native courts that they have quarrelled and that she no longer wishes to live with him. But if that is all she merely gets a paper of divorce and either herself or her next husband has to refund to the aggrieved former husband the sum originally paid for her. If, however, she can prove violence or injury from her husband she has not to pay him anything, but may even in some cases get damages.

A girl is usually given the option of refusing the man whom her parents have arranged for her to marry. This is not often done, but I have known of some cases in which the girl has availed herself of the privilege, and stated that she prefers some one else, in which case the engagement is broken and the new marriage arranged at once with the man of her choice.

In the villages, and among the lower classes in the cities, girls are not usually married until they are about sixteen. Frequently, however, among the higher and wealthier classes the engagement is made by the parents when she is much younger, perhaps eleven or twelve, and she is after that confined with some strictness to the house or else carefully watched.

There is a very vicious and terribly degrading habit amongst the Hausas, which is known as "Tsaranchi." One cannot give in a word an Eng-

lish equivalent and one does not desire to describe its meaning. It has the effect of demoralizing most of the young girls and making it almost certain that very few girls of even eleven or twelve have retained any feelings of decency and virtue.

In this the girls are deliberately the tempters, and many boys and young men are led into sin who would not have sought it. Here one must not blame the women or the girls, for the original sin is with the men, who, through the terribly degrading system of polygamy and slave concubinage, have introduced since centuries that which destroys the purity of the home, and makes it impossible for the children to grow up clean-minded. It is a sad fact that the evil effect of this seems to have acted more on the women and children than on the men.

One feels sorely for the boys brought up in this land without a glimpse of purity in true home life; with never a notion of a woman being the most holy and chaste and beautiful of all God's creation, and never seeing even the beauty of girlhood purity.

One is glad to see that among many of the men there is a growing feeling that they have lost much in this way; and often in talking to men on the subject of women and their naturally depraved condition, I have shown them how, where women are given the place God meant them to have in the home and in the social and religious life of a people, their character is always the most regenerating thing in the life of a nation, and that it is useless for them

to wish their women to be different when they do everything to prevent the possibility. With the boys in my own compound and under my own care I am bound to forbid all intercourse with girls because of their evil minds and influence. Of course such a thing is fearfully unnatural and cuts off from a boy's life all those influences which we in Christian lands consider so much tend to strengthen and deepen and soften his character.

It is easy to see from the above the reason why amongst those who are careful to preserve a semblance of chastity, the girls are carefully secluded from a tender age and not allowed outside their compounds except under exceptional circumstances, until the time that they are about to be taken to the house of the man to whom they have been betrothed.

This preservation of virtue by force, points to the fact that there is no public opinion; no love of purity for its own sake; no real and vital principle in Islam which tends to preserve and build up purity.

A mere lad, the viciousness of whose first wife had led him quickly to take a second, said to me when protested with for doing it, "Our women are not like yours, and you can never tell what it all means to us. Even if we wanted to be good they would hinder us."

The existence of a large class of pagan slave girls, who have been caught and brought from their own homes and carried into the Hausa country to become

members of the harem of some of the Hausas, also complicates and intensifies the evil; for this mixture only tends to lower the standards and make the facilities for sin tenfold easier.

It is not true in the Central Soudan, as is so often stated, that polygamy tends to diminish the greater evils of common adultery and prostitution. These are very frequent, and it is perfectly true what man after man has sadly told me, that no one trusts even his own brother in the case of married relationships. I am bound to acknowledge, however, in honesty, that these evils are intensified in the cantonments with their large number of native soldiers of loose character, and some even of one's own immoral countrymen.

I have seen very little systematic cruelty towards women or children, except of course in the slave-raiding and slave markets which are now happily abolished. Women are able to take care of themselves and certainly do, so far as I have seen.

The knowledge that a wife may leave at will, that less labor can be got out of a cruelly-treated slave wife, and that little girls can leave home and find a place elsewhere, all have tended to make women's lives freer, and to some extent less hard in the Central Soudan than in North Africa.

On the other hand, one is struck with the apparent lack of love, and forced to the conclusion that a woman is not in any sense, to a man of the Hausa race, more than a necessary convenience; a woman

to look after his house, have children, and prepare his meals. In old age she is often abandoned or driven away, or becomes a mere drudge. This is often the case also with a man, if not wealthy; when old his wives will leave him, and many a case I have seen of such desolation. Of real love which triumphs over circumstances of poverty and sickness there is but little; women will leave their husbands when through misfortune they have lost their wealth, and go and marry another, returning later when fortune has again favored the original husband and frowned on the later one.

I met one beautiful exception to this. One of the most beautiful girls I have seen in the Hausa states, with a really good face and one which anywhere would have been pronounced pretty, brought her blind husband to me. When married he had been really good to her, and after one year had lost his sight. For four years she had stuck to him and tended him and really loved him, taking him from one native doctor to another, and at last to me. It was touching to see her gentleness to him and the evident trust of each in the other. I have never seen such another in the Hausa country. Yet what possibilities of the future!

Very few girls attain the most elementary standard of education. But some few *do* and every facility is provided for those who can and will go farther, and I have known girls, mostly those whose fathers were *mallams,* who learned to read and write

the Koran well, and who were considered quite proficient; and at least one case I know of a woman who, because of her wisdom and education, was entrusted with the rule of two or three cities in her father's Emirate.

The chief occupations of women are the grinding of corn and the preparation of food for the family, the care of their babies, who are slung on their backs, the carrying of water from the well or brook, and, to some extent in the villages, agriculture, though with the exception of the poor slaves it is rare to see women overworked in the fields.

They are great traders also, and if not young or too attractive looking, they are allowed to take their flour, their sweetmeats, etc., to the markets and trade. Then again when the season for all agricultural work is at an end, and their husbands and brothers start for the west and the coast places, for the long wearisome journey which takes them to the places where they sell their rubber, nitre, and other goods, and bring back salt, woollen and cotton goods, the women go with them, and it is a most pretty and interesting sight to see the long row of these young women, in single file, neatly and modestly dressed, with white overalls and a load of calabashes and cooking utensils neatly packed and carried on their heads. They often sing as they march, and coming in at the end of the day's journey, light the fires and prepare the meal for themselves and their male relatives, while the latter go and gather the

sticks and grass to make a temporary shelter for the night.

They are tidy, industrious, and lively, and, to any one who did not understand their language, these women would give the impression of a charming picture and of many things good and true. But to one who could hear the conversation, as I often have, the secret of the utter depravity of all the people is soon learned, and one sees how it is that none grow up with any idea of purity. The minds of even young children are vitiated from the earliest age.

I have found many very "religious" women. It must, however, not be forgotten that the religion of Islam is totally divorced from the practice of all morals. Women in some numbers attend the weekly midday service in the mosques, sitting apart and worshipping.

One very handsome woman whom I knew had as a little child been enslaved, and later married to the Emir of Zaria, and had been the mother or step-mother of many of the Zaria princes. She was a very religious woman, was allowed a fair amount of liberty, and was much respected. She not infrequently attended the services and was much interested. But it is certain that, with the exception of the use of a certain number of pious expressions, religion has little hold over the Hausa women, and they can in no sense be considered to share in the devotions of the men, or to be companions with the men in those things which are the deepest part of

human nature. Hence with Christians there is the learning of a new relationship altogether, when the man begins to feel that his wife must be his companion and helpmeet in things pertaining to all his life and soul and spirit.

Amongst the very lowest classes, with whom there are less objections to coming into contact with men, and especially white men, and who in their suffering have allowed us to minister to them, I have been able to get a glimpse into the terrible sufferings of the poor women of all the other classes. In their hours of agony and suffering they can get no alleviation, no nursing or skill to shorten the hours of weary pain, and in large numbers they die terrible deaths for the lack of that surgical help we could so easily render them. I was able once to visit a woman who seemed to be dying. She was in a terrible condition; the complete delivery of her child could not be effected, and for two days she had been in a shocking state. In their despair her people asked me to come, and within three hours, by surgical knowledge, we were able to put her right, and finally get her to sleep and complete her cure. But we were told that many, many died in the condition in which we found her, and that there was never any thought of calling for help. Many a man who seemed fairly intelligent, and to whom I have talked almost with indignation of such things, has answered me: "We do not know what to do; our women cannot help these cases, for they have no

skill, and we would any of us rather let them die than call a man in to help." And so they do die. They will not yet trust us, although they fully realize that we are different from their own religious leaders. Whole realms of thought have yet to be broken through, whole tracts of life principles and perverted ideas have to be destroyed, before it will be possible for the many poor sufferers in this land to get what the love of Christ has brought within their grasp, but which they are afraid as yet to take.

I have tried to show that there is a bright as well as a sombre side to this picture; that where there is restraint there is often some kindness; that with ignorance there is often a desire and a yearning after better things, and a dull feeling that what *is*, is *not* best.

Nothing but a radical change in the very fundamental ideas of woman, even by woman herself, can bring about the regeneration of this land. Only the restoration of woman to the place gained for her by Christ, and snatched from her again by the prophet of Islam, can bring true holiness and life into the homes of Hausa, and bring a new hope and reality into the lives of the men.

The knowledge and worship of Christ are beginning to do this, and in one or two homes in North Nigeria already men, who previously thought woman inferior human beings or superior cattle, and who would have looked upon it as madness to suggest that a woman should be considered the helpmeet

of the man in all that pertains to this life Godward and manward, are restoring to their wives and mothers and sisters that dignity. How happy will be the result when this spirit has spread and all the land has begun to feel the influence of good and holy women in the home, the market, the school, and the church.

IX

A STORY FROM EAST AFRICA

MOMBASA, though a Mohammedan town, is perhaps scarcely a typical one, as of late years it has become decidedly cosmopolitan, still in what is called the "Old Town" Mohammedanism with all its attendant ignorance and bigotry prevails.

There are women in this part of the mission-field with whom we have talked and prayed in past years, who seem further off from the Truth and Light than they were even in those early years of work amongst them.

These are the words of a young girl who, we know, was convinced of the truth of the Gospel: "Oh, Bibi, if I confess Christ openly I shall be turned out of my home, I shall have neither food nor clothing, and [with a shudder] perhaps they will kill me." We knew this was only too true.

She was a beautiful girl with sweet, gentle manners, living in those days with her sister in a dark, ill-ventilated room which opened on to a small courtyard where all the rubbish of the house seemed to be thrown, and where goats, hens, and miserable-looking cats seemed thoroughly at home amongst the refuse.

Yet, in spite of these surroundings and in spite of her knowledge of all manner of evil (alas! how early these children learn things which we would think impossible to teach a little child), in spite of all this she was pure and good. Now she seems to have no desire at all to hear or read the Gospel. When we do see her, her manner is always flippant and worldly. We don't want to give her up, we keep on praying for her, but there have been so many hardening influences since those early days, and she never took the definite step of openly confessing Christ. She was soon married to a man much older than herself who already had a wife; probably more than one. We suppose he was a higher bidder!

She had one little baby that soon pined away and died. How can women, brought up as she was, have healthy children? Amongst all the Mohammedan women I have visited here I have never known one to have more than two children. The majority have no living child.

I believe the husband was kind to her, but he did not live long, and very soon she was married again. If she bears no children he will probably tire of her and leave her. I have been told by one of the women that if a wife does not cook his food properly he may get a divorce. One old woman I saw to-day told me that her daughter is now married to her third husband; the other two left her for some trivial reason. When I asked, "What will become of her when she is old and perhaps cast off again?"

"Ah, Bibi!" she said, "what *has* become of me? I am weak and ill and old, and yet I have to cook and work for others." This is just what does happen unless they have a house and property of their own. They become household drudges to those relations who take them in, and there is rejoicing at their death.

The rule here is for each man to have four wives, if he can afford it. The number of concubines is, I believe, unlimited. Here the wives live each in a separate house. The reason given is: "If we lived together we should be jealous and quarrel and make our husband miserable."

I have known cases where the husband has only the one wife and there seems to be a certain amount of affection. One little wife said to me the other day, "I love my husband now, but if he ever takes another wife I shall hate him and leave him."

Could one blame her?

In most cases just as a girl has learned to read she has been forbidden by her husband, and I have been told, "My husband says there is no profit in women learning to read and he has forbidden it."

How one has felt for and grieved with some of these women! One day in going as usual to give a reading lesson to a mother and daughter (these two really loved each other), I found them both very sad and miserable. It seemed that the father of the girl determined to marry her to an elderly man whom, of course, she had never seen. The mother

said her daughter was too young to be married, and she knew something of the character of the man. She begged me to try and do something, but we were quite helpless in the matter; a large sum of money was paid for the daughter. Some time afterwards when I visited the house the mother said to me, "Yes, Bibi, she is married to him and I have had to sit in the room listening to the cries of my child as he ill-treated her in the next room, but I could do nothing."

How one longs for the skill to bring home to our favored English girls and wives and mothers, the awful wrongs and the needs of these their Moslem sisters! But what human weakness cannot do, God by His Holy Spirit can. May He lead some of you to give yourselves to the glorious work of bringing light and life to these your sisters who are "Sitting in darkness and the shadow of death." Love is what they want. Our love that will bring knowledge of Christ's great love to them. Will you not pray for them?

X

OUR ARABIAN SISTERS

"Women are worthless creatures and soil men's reputations."
"The heart of a woman is given to folly."

—ARABIC PROVERBS.

THIS is an outline sketch of the pitiful intellectual, social, and moral condition of the nearly four million women and girls in Mohammedan Arabia. To begin with, the percentage of illiteracy, although not so great as in some other Moslem lands, is at least eighty per cent. of the whole number. In Eastern Arabia a number of girls attend schools, but the instruction and discipline are very indifferent; attention to the lesson is not demanded, so that a Moslem school is a paradise for a lazy girl! A girl is removed from school very early to prepare for her life-work and that is marriage. In a majority of cases she soon forgets what little knowledge she may have attained. A few women are good readers, but these are the most bigoted and fanatical of all women, and it is difficult to make any impression upon them as they are firmly convinced that the Koran contains all they need for salvation now and hereafter.

General ignorance is the cause of general unhappi-

ness and such dense ignorance often makes them suspicious and unreasonable. Nothing is done by the men to educate their women. On the contrary, their object seems to be to keep them from thinking for themselves. They "treat them like brutes and they behave as such." The men keep their feet on the necks of their women and then expect them to rise! The same men who themselves indulge in the grossest form of immorality become very angry and cruel if there is a breath of scandal against their women. In Bahrein, a young pearl-diver heard a rumor that his sister was not a pure woman; he returned immediately from the divings and stabbed her in a most diabolical way without even inquiring as to the truth of the matter. She died in great agony from her injuries, and the brother was acquitted by a Moslem judge, who is himself capable of breaking all the commandments.

Polygamy is practised by all who can afford this so-called luxury, particularly by those in high positions. The wives of these men are not happy, but submit since they believe it is the will of God and of His prophet. The women are not at all content with their condition, and each one wishes herself to be the favored one and will take steps to insure this if possible. Those who have learned a little of the social condition of women in Christian lands very readily appreciate the difference.

It is a common thing for us to be asked to prescribe poison for a rival wife who has been added

to the household and for the time being is the favorite. Through jealousy some of these supplanted wives plunge into a life of sin. I do not know anything more pathetic than to have to listen to a poor soul pleading for a love-philter or potion to bring back the so-called love of a perfidious husband. Women, whether rich or poor, naturally prefer to be the only wife. Divorce is fearfully common; I think perhaps it is the case in nine out of every ten marriages. Many women have been divorced several times. They marry again, but this early and frequent divorce causes much immorality. Some divorced women return to the house of their parents, while the homeless ones are most miserable and find escape from misery only in death.

All these horrible social conditions complicate matters and it is difficult to find out who is who in these mixed houses. It is far more pathetic to go through some Moslem homes than to visit a home for foundlings. When a woman is divorced, the father may keep the children if he wishes, and no matter how much a heart-broken mother may plead for them, she is not allowed to have them. If the man does not wish to keep them he sends the children with the mother, and if she marries again the new husband does not expect to contribute to the support of the children of the former marriage.

There can be no pure home-life, as the children are wise above their years in the knowledge of sin.

Nothing is kept from them and they are perfectly conversant with the personal history of their parents, past and present.

A man may have a new wife every few months if he so desires, and in some parts of Arabia this is a common state of affairs among the rich chiefs. The result of all this looseness of morals is indescribable. Unnatural vice abounds, and so do contagious diseases which are the inheritance of poor little children.

There is a very large per cent. of infant mortality partly on this account, and partly on account of gross ignorance in the treatment of the diseases of childhood.

Instead of a home full of love and peace, there is dissension and distrust. The heart of the husband does not trust his wife and she seeks to do him evil, not good. For example, a woman is thought very clever if she can cheat her husband out of his money or capital, and lay it up for herself in case she is divorced. There is nothing to bind them in sweet communion and interchange of confidences. As a rule, when a man and a woman marry they do not look for mutual consideration and respect and courtesy; marriage is rather looked upon as a good or a bad bargain. That marriage has anything to do with the affections does not often occur to them. If only a man's passions can be satisfied and his material needs provided, that is all he expects from marriage.

But I do not deny that there are grand though not frequent exceptions to this evil system. I have seen a man cling to his wife and love her and grieve sadly when she died. And some Arab fathers dearly love their daughters and mourn at the loss of one, and the little girls show sincere affection for their fathers. And yet all these bright spots only make the general blackness of home-life seem more dense and dismal.

Missionary schools and education in general have done much in breaking up this system. Many Moslems of the higher class are trying to justify the grosser side of their book-religion by spiritualizing the Koran teaching. But secular education will never make a firm foundation for the elevation of a nation or an individual. Those who have been led to see the weakness of a religion that degrades women, have gained their knowledge through the Gospel.

The fact that attention is paid to suffering women by medical missions is already changing the prevalent idea that woman is inferior and worthless. And although it may seem sometimes an impossible task to ever raise these women to think higher thoughts and to rise from the degradation of centuries, yet we know from experience that those who come in contact with Christian women soon learn to avoid all unclean conversation in their presence. Visiting them in their huts and homes is also a means of breaking down prejudice. The daily clinic

in the three mission hospitals of East Arabia, where thousands of sick women receive as much attention as do the men, is winning the hearts and opening the eyes of many to see what disinterested love is. They can scarcely understand what constrains Christian women to go into such unlovely surroundings and touch bodies loathsome from disease in the dispensaries.

When the men have wisdom to perceive that the education of their women and girls means the elevation of their nation, and when they give the women an opportunity to become more than mere animals, then will the nation become progressive and alive to its great possibilities. Reformation cannot come from within but must come from without, from the living power of the Christ. Are you not responsible to God for a part in the evangelization of Arabia in this generation?

> "Let none whom He hath ransomed fail to greet Him,
> Through thy neglect unfit to see His face."

The following earnest words, from one who being dead yet speaketh, are a plea for more workers to come out to Arabia. Marion Wells Thoms, M. D., labored for five years in Arabia and wrote in one of her last letters as follows:

"The Mohammedan religion has done much to degrade womanhood. To be sure, female infanticide formerly practised by the heathen Arabs was abol-

ished by Islam, but that death was not so terrible as the living death of thousands of the Arab women who have lived since the reign of the 'merciful' prophet, nor was its effect upon society in general so demoralizing. In the 'time of ignorance,' that is time before Mohammed, women often occupied positions of honor. There were celebrated poetesses and we read of Arab queens ruling their tribes.

"Such a state of things does not exist to-day, but the woman's influence, though never recognized by the men, is nevertheless indirectly a potent factor, but never of a broadening or uplifting character. To have been long regarded as naturally evil has had a degrading influence. Mohammedan classical writers have done their best to revile womanhood. 'May Allah never bless womankind' is a quotation from one of them.

"Moslem literature, it is true, exhibits isolated glimpses of a worthier estimation of womanhood, but the later view, which comes more and more into prevalence, is the only one which finds its expression in the sacred tradition, which represents hell as full of women, and refuses to acknowledge in its women, apart from rare exceptions, either reason or religion, in poems which refer all the evil in the world to the woman as its root, in proverbs which represent a careful education of girls as mere waste.

"When the learned ones ascribe such characteristics to women, is it any wonder that they have come to regard themselves as mere beasts of burden?

The Arab boy spends ten or twelve years of his life largely in the women's quarters, listening to their idle conversation about household affairs and their worse than idle talk about their jealousies and intrigues.

"When the boy becomes a man, although he has absolute dominion over his wife as far as the right to punish or divorce her is concerned, he often yields to her decision in regard to some line of action. In treating a woman I have sometimes appealed to the husband to prevail upon his wife to consent to more severe treatment than she was willing to receive. After conversing with his wife his answer has been, 'She will not consent,' and that has been final. Lady Ann Blunt, who has travelled among the Bedouins, says, 'In more than one sheikh's tent it is the women's half of it in which the politics of the tribe are settled.'

"In regard to their religion they believe what they have been told or have heard read from the Koran and other religious books. They do not travel as much as the men, and do not have the opportunity of listening to those who do, hence their ideas are not changed by what they see and hear. All the traditions of Mohammed and other heroes are frequently rehearsed and implicitly believed.

"Although the Arab race is considered a strong one, we find among the women every ill to which their flesh is heir, unrelieved and oftentimes even aggravated by their foolish native treatment. A

mother's heart cannot help but ache as she hears the Arab mother tell of the loss of two, three, four, or more of her children, the sacrifice perhaps to her own ignorance. The physical need of the Arab women is great and we pray that it may soon appeal to some whose medical training fits them to administer to this need in all parts of Arabia.

"In the towns in which there are missionaries there are comparatively few houses in which they are not welcomed. In our own station there are more open houses than we have ever had time to visit. Wherever women travellers, of whom there have been two of some note, have gone, they have been met with kindness; hence it will be seen that the open door is not lacking."

Ignorance, superstition, and sensuality are the characteristics which impress themselves most strongly at first upon one who visits the Arab harem, but there are those, too, among the women who are really attractive. It is a dark picture, and we do not urge the need of more workers because the fields are white to harvest. We ask that more offer themselves and be sent soon, rather, that, after they have learned the difficult language, they may be able to begin *to prepare the ground for seed-sowing.* It is a work that can only be done by women, for while the Bedouin women have greater freedom to go about and converse with the men than the town women have, and while some of the poorer classes in the towns will allow themselves to be treated by a

man doctor, and sit and listen to an address made in the dispensary, the better class are only accessible in their houses. Their whole range of ideas is so limited and so far below ours that it will require "line upon line and precept upon precept" to teach these women that there is a higher and better life for them. In fact there must be the creation of the desire for better things as far as most of them are concerned, but love and tact accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit can win their way to these hearts and accomplish the same results that have been accomplished among other Oriental women.

I have been striving to show that there is a crying need for work among the Arab women and that there are ample opportunities for service. I appeal to the women of the church whose sympathies have so long gone out to heathen women everywhere, not to have less sympathy for them, but to include Mohammedan Arabia and her womanhood more and more in their love, their gifts, and their prayers. In the days of Mohammed, after the battle of Khaibar, in which so many of her people had been mercilessly slaughtered, Zeinab, the Jewess, who prepared a meal for Mohammed and his men, put poison in the mutton and all but caused the prophet's death. It is said by some that he never fully recovered from the effects of the poison, and that it was an indirect cause of his death. It seems to us who have lived and labored in the land of the false prophet that his religion will only receive its death-

blow when Christian women rise to their duty and privilege, and by love and sacrifice, not in vengeance but in mercy, send the true religion to these our neglected, degraded sisters,—sisters in Him who "hath made of one blood all nations."

XI

WOMEN'S LIFE IN THE YEMEN

THE term "Yemen," meaning the land on the right hand, is the name applied to that whole tract of land in Arabia south of Mecca and west of the Hadramaut, which has always been looked upon as a dependency or province.

In early historical times the Yemen was occupied by Homerites and other aborigines, but later on by the Himyarites, who drove many of the original inhabitants to seek a new home in Africa, where, having intermarried with the Gallas, Kaffirs, and Dankalis, they formed a new race which is generally known nowadays as the Somali.

The physical conformation of the Yemen is not unlike that of the portion of Africa immediately opposite, where there is as great diversity in climate and soil as there is in the manners and customs of the peoples.

From Aden, the Eastern Gibraltar, right northward there stretches a range of mountains chiefly formed of igneous rocks that have been bent, torn, and twisted like the iron girders of a huge building that has been destroyed by fire and almost covered by the ruin. Bare peak after peak rises from the

mass of débris yet everywhere pierced, scarred, and seamed by the monsoon floods seeking their way to the ocean bed; they seldom reach it, however, as a stream and never as a river, because of the barren, scorched, sandy zone which belts the Red Sea and sucks into its huge maw everything that the hills send down.

Like his country the Yemen Arab is girded about with an arid zone of reserve which few Europeans have ever crossed, but when they have managed to do so, according to the individual they have met, they have found it may be a man with a heart as hard as a nether millstone. Marrying one day and divorcing almost the next, only to marry another as soon as he can scrape together sufficient funds to purchase a wife, this type of man looks upon woman as an inferior animal formed for man's gratification, and to be flung aside like a sucked orange when the juice is gone.

Or on the other hand, they may find men whom real love has saved and made to give forth warm affection and true domestic joy, just as the terraced ridges on their mountain slopes retain the God-given moisture and send forth a luxuriant crop of strengthening cereals, delicious coffee, and luscious grapes.

I have known young men of twenty-four who have been married and divorced half a dozen times, and also Arabs whose days are in the sere and yellow leaf who never had but one wife.

There was a native chief who used to come occasionally to our dispensary whose children were numbered by three figures, and Khan Bahadur Numcherjee Rustomjee, C. I. E., who was for many years a magistrate in Aden, told me he knew a woman who had been legally married more than fifty times and had actually forgotten the names of the fathers of two of her children!

One day an Arab brought a fine-looking woman to our dispensary, and as he was very kind to her and seemed to love her very much I ventured to tell him that she was suffering from diabetes mellitus, and that in order to preserve her life he would require to be careful with her diet. He thanked me most profoundly, promised to do all that he could for her, took her home and divorced her the same day, casting her off in the village and leaving her without a copper.

Next morning she came weeping to the dispensary and I tried to get compensation, but the man pleaded poverty, and because I was the cause of her plight I felt in duty bound to support her until she died some months later.

Another man of more than fifty years carried the wife of his youth to our dispensary on his back. She was suffering from Bright's disease and ascites, yet he toiled on and till now has shown no sign of wavering in his allegiance. Warm-hearted, courteous, and kind, I look upon him as one of nature's noblemen whom even Mohammedanism cannot spoil.

Another man whose wife had an ovarian tumor brought her down from Hodeidah for me to operate on, and faithfully attended to all her wants while she was ill, and at last when the wound caused by operation was healed, took her home joyfully as a bridegroom takes home the bride of his choice.

A third man, who had either two or three wives at the time, called me to see one who had been in labor for six days. When the Arab midwives confessed that they could do nothing more for her and when he saw her sinking, love triumphed over prejudice, and he came hurriedly for me. I performed a Cæsarean section, and so earned the gratitude of both husband and wife, who, though years have gone, still take a warm interest in all that concerns the mission.

I wish, however, that I could say that cases like these were common experiences with me, but unfortunately the reverse is the case. Men seem always ashamed to speak of their wives and when wanting medicine for them or me to visit them always speak of them as, "my family"—"the mother of my children"—"my uncle's daughters," or like circumlocution. Once I boxed a boy's ears for speaking of his own mother as his "father's cow!"

Brought up in ignorance, unable to read, write, sew, or do fancy work—in all my experience out here I have never known of a real Arab girl being sent to school nor a real Arab woman who knew the alphabet. Sold at a marriageable age, in many cases to the highest bidder, then kept closely secluded

in the house, is it any wonder that her health is undermined and when brought to child-bed there is no strength left?

Called one day to see a Somali woman I missed the whip usually seen in a Somali's house, and jokingly asked how her husband managed to keep her in order without a whip. She, taking her husband and me by the hand, said, "You are my father and this is my husband. Love unites us, and where love is there is no need for whips."

I was so pleased with her speech that I offered her husband, who was out of work, a subordinate place in our dispensary. Yet less than a month later I heard that he had divorced his wife and turned her out of doors.

The following case will, I think, illustrate the usual attitude of the Arabs in the Yemen towards womankind:

A man whose wife had been in labor two days came asking for medicine to make her well. My reply was that it was necessary to see the woman before I could give such a drug as he wished. "Well," said he, "she will die before I allow you or any other man to see her," and two days after I heard of her death.

I have often remonstrated with the men for keeping their wives so closely confined and for not delighting in their company, and making them companions and friends. But almost invariably I have been answered thus, "The Prophet (upon whom be

blessing and peace) said, 'Do not trouble them with what they cannot bear, for they are prisoners in your hands whom you took in trust from God.'" And therefore as prisoners they are to be kept and treated as being of inferior intellect.

I have known cases where a man gave his daughter in marriage on condition that the bridegroom would never marry another wife; but the man broke his word and married a second wife, whereupon he was summoned before the kadi, who ruled that, "When a man marries a woman on condition that he would not marry another at the same time with her, the contract is valid and the condition void because it makes unlawful what is lawful, and God knoweth all."

The consequence of such laws is that the women become prone to criminal intrigues, and I have known dozens of cases where mothers have helped their daughters and even acted as procuresses for them to avenge some slight upon them or injury done to them. There is no fear of God before their eyes. Heaven to them is little better than a place of prostitution. Why, then, should they desire it? Here they know the bitterness of being one of two or three wives, why then should they wish to be "one of seventy"?

XII

PEN-AND-INK SKETCHES IN PALESTINE

SIR WILLIAM MUIR, who lived for forty years in India, says: "The sword of Islam and the Koran are the most obstinate foes to civilization, liberty, and truth the world has yet known." After a residence of nearly twenty years in Palestine and much intercourse among all classes, both in city and village life, the writer of this chapter can confirm the statement.

Islam is the same everywhere and changes not.

The chief cause of its blighting influence is its degradation and contempt of women, which is the result of ignorance of the Word of God. *Therefore, the wide-spread preaching of the Gospel to-day is the need of Islam,* and the responsibility for it rests chiefly upon the Christians of England and America.

One looks in vain among Moslems for peaceful homes, honored wives, affectionate husbands, happy sons and daughters, loving and trusting one another.

A Moslem home is built upon the foundation of the man's right (*religious right*) to have at least four wives at a time; to divorce them at pleasure

and to bring others as frequently as he has the inclination or the money to buy.

A son is always welcomed at birth with shrill shouts and boisterous clapping of hands or beating of drums; but a baby girl is received in silence and disappointment.

The boy is indulged in every way from the day of his arrival. He is under no restraint or control, and usually at two years of age is a little tyrant, freely cursing his mother and sisters. The mother smiles at his cleverness, she herself having taught him, and her own teaching leads afterwards to much misery in the lives of other women.

Great numbers of boys die in infancy, or under three years of age, because of the ignorance of their mothers in caring for them. They are either overfed or neglected. In some families, where there have been a number of both boys and girls, all the boys have died. The women have been blamed for this and sometimes divorced, or else retained to serve the new wives who have been brought instead.

How often I think of the dear little Moslem girls! The most teachable and responsive to loving kindness of all. Oh, that they might have happy homes, happy mothers, wise and loving fathers! One dear Moslem child, only four years old, after having been in a Christian mission school for a year, was taken ill and died. All the members of a large family were present as she lay dying (crowding into the room of the sick is an Oriental custom) and heard

her exclaim: "My mother! Jesus loves little girls just like me!"

A Moslem can divorce his wife at his pleasure or send her away from his house without a divorce. If he does only the latter, she cannot marry any one else. This is often done purposely to torment her. But the women are not the only sufferers through these wretched domestic arrangements. Many of them are utterly heartless and show no pity for their own children. They will leave them to marry again, the new husband refusing to take the children, and numbers die in consequence. Many a troublesome old man is also put out of the way by poison administered by the wives of his sons. Not long ago a prison, in an Oriental city, was visited by some Christian missionaries who had obtained permission to see the women who had been sentenced for life. They are found to be there for having murdered their "da-râ-ir," that is, their husbands' other wives, or the children of their hated rivals; and, having no money, they had not been able to buy their way out of prison, as can be done and is customary in Moslem countries.

As the camera would not do full justice to Moslem "interiors," either in house-life or in the administration of public affairs, both also being difficult to obtain, a few "pen and ink" sketches are sent by the writer of this article, taken in person on the spot.

Here is a picture of Abu Ali's household. Abu

Ali has two wives, Aisha and Amina. Confusion and every evil thing are found in his family life. Each wife has five children, large and small, and the ten of the two families all hate each other. They fight and bite, scratch out each other's eyes, and pull out each other's hair. The husband has good houses and gardens but the women and children all live in dark, damp rooms on the ground floor. The writer knows them and often goes to see them, especially to comfort the older wife, whose life is very wretched. She is almost starved at times. She weeps many bitter tears and curses the religion into which she was born. The Prophet Mohammed's religion makes many a man a heartless tyrant. He is greatly to be pitied because a victim by inheritance to this vast system of evil. Wild animals show more affection for their offspring and certainly take (for a while at least) more responsibility for their young than many Moslems do in Palestine.

Werdie is another case. This name in Arabic means "a rose." There are many sweet young roses in the East but, hidden away among thorns and brambles, their fragrance is often lost. This Werdie, a fair young blue-eyed girl whose six own brothers had all died, lived with her mother and father and his other wives in a very large Oriental house (not a *home*). She lived in the midst of continual strife, cursings, "evil eyes," and fights. This household is a distinguished family in their town!

Sometimes the quarrels lasted for many days without cessation and Werdie always took part in them as her mother's champion. The quarrels were between her father's wives,—her mother's rivals,—and she often boasted that she could hold out longer than all the others combined against her. On one occasion her awful language and loud railings continued for three days, and then she lost her voice—utterly—and could not speak for weeks! She had an ungoverned temper, and when goaded by the cruel injustice done her mother she delighted to give vent to it; but she also had a conscience and a good mind and was led into the Light. On being told of the power in Jesus Christ to overcome, she said one day, "I will try Him. I want peace in my heart, I will do anything to get it; I believe in Him and I will trust Him," and she did. She was afterwards given in marriage by her father, against her wish, to a man she did not know. He treats her cruelly as does also her mother-in-law. But now she has another spirit, a meek and lowly one, and is truly a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the midst of strife she is a silent sufferer and a marvel to all the members of her family. She prays much and has literally a broken and a contrite spirit. She is the Lord's. There are other roses among the Moslems whom Jesus Christ came to redeem. Let us pray for them and go and find them! *He will point the way.*

Saleh Al Wahhâb is a Moslem in good position

with ample means. He first married a sweet-looking young girl, Belise by name, but she had no children, so he divorced her and married three other women. Not having his desire for children granted, he divorced all three of these women and took back his first wife, who was quite willing to go to him!

Haji Hamid, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca, was the chief of a Matâwaly village and highly honored, belonging to the Shiah sect of Moslems. He has had many wives, some of whom he had divorced because they displeased him, and others had died. When he became an old man, he brought a young and, as he was assured by others, a very beautiful and virtuous bride. He had never seen her. He paid a large sum of money for her, most of which she wore afterwards as ornaments—gold coins—on her head and neck.

Soon after her arrival in the sheikh's house he became seriously ill. She found this unpleasant, as she was a bride and wanted to enjoy herself. So she ran away, taking all the gold with her, and left him to die!

There is no honor or truth among Moslems. The Prophet's religion does not and cannot implant pity or compassion in the human heart. Haji Hamid had inherited from his birth false teaching, the evil influences and results of lying, corruption in Government affairs, tyranny, bribery, bigotry, and contempt for women. He only reaped as he had sown. However, he heard the Gospel on his dying bed and

seemed grateful for kindnesses shown to him by Christian strangers.

Abd Er Rahim, "Slave of the Merciful," was a rich Moslem who once had several wives. Some he had divorced, some he had sent back to their fathers' homes, and some had died, and he was tired of the one who remained because she was getting old.

By chance he had seen a very handsome young peasant girl, and he wanted her, but he was afraid of his wife, for he felt sure that she would be troublesome if he brought this young girl to his house. So he planned a "shimel-howa" for his wife (a pleasant time, literally, a "smelling of the air," a promenade), to which she readily agreed. She put on her jewelry and silk outer garments, and started. Her husband was to follow her, but, according to Moslem custom, at a distance, as a man is not seen in public with his wife. She never returned, but was found dead two days afterwards, drowned in a well, wearing all her jewelry. Her husband found her. The facts were never investigated. A few days afterwards the new wife was brought into the house and lived there until the death of Abd Er Rahim. He has now gone to his reward! He never knew anything about the Lord Jesus Christ. No one ever told him. His last wife, however, did have the opportunity of knowing, but she laughed and made fun of His name. When she died, about three years ago, twenty large jars of water were

poured over her to wash away her sins. She was arrayed in several silk gowns and buried, with verses from the Koran written on paper placed in her dead hands, to keep evil spirits away from her soul. Such is their ignorant superstition.

Benda was a poor Moslem woman who lived in a goat's-hair tent on one of the plains mentioned in the Bible, a Bedouin Arab's cast-off wife. She had lost her only child, her son, a young man. When first found, she herself was a mere skeleton. Very deaf and clothed in rags, she sat on the ground, weeping bitterly over the two long black braids of hair of her dead son, a pitiful object. It was very difficult to make her hear, but she was taught, often amidst the roars of laughter of some nominal Christians who said to her teacher: "Why do you cast pearls before swine?"

However, Benda was one of His jewels. She had a hungry heart, she understood the truth, believed, and was saved and comforted. Before she "went up higher" she became a "witness" to some of her own people.

There are other Moslem Bendas yet to be found, others to be brought into the fold. Who will come to help to find them and to bring them in? The lost sheep of the house of Ishmael.

Some one has asked: "What happens to the cast-off wives and divorced women among the Moslems?" Sometimes they are married several times and divorced by several men. If they have no chil-

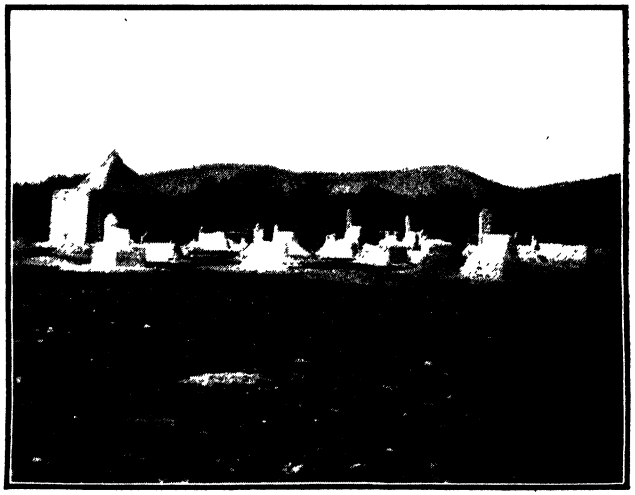
dren, after their strength fails them so that they cannot work, they beg and lead a miserable existence, and die. A woman who has lived at ease and in high position, after being divorced, will sometimes reach the very lowest degrees of poverty, hunger, and misery, and then die. For such, there are no funeral expenses; nothing is required but a shallow grave. Moslem men are usually willing to dig that in their own burying ground, and the body is carried to its last resting place on the public "ma'ash," or bier. Benda was buried in this way, but "she had an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away."

Sheikh Haj Hamid's story is that of a rescued Moslem. Let me tell it to you.

There is to-day in the far East a town built out of the ruins of a city of great antiquity, in the land where giants once lived, and King Og reigned (Genesis xiv. 5; Deuteronomy iii. 11, 13).

Some of the Lord's messengers went out there, recently, to gather into the fold any of His scattered and wandering sheep they might find. Probably the Gospel had not been preached there for one thousand five hundred years. The Lord had promised to go before His messengers, and had assured them that there were sheep in that place who would hear His voice and follow Him, and, trusting this sure guidance, they started. "In journeyings, often, in perils of water, in perils of robbers, in perils in the wilderness, in perils among

A CHRISTIAN CEMETERY



A MOSLEM CEMETERY

false brethren," they searched for the sheep and lambs—and found them. One of the number was a dignified, gray-haired Moslem sheikh who, on hearing "the call," with groans and tears asked, "What must I do to be saved, for my sins reach up to Heaven? What am I to do with them? For forty long years I have gone daily to the mosque, but never before, until this day, have I heard of salvation in Jesus Christ." And he wept aloud and cried out: "Won't you pray for me?" He eagerly received instruction and believed. His last and oft repeated words to his new-found Christian friends, as they rode away, were: "Won't you continue to pray for me?"

The Lord Jesus Christ is speaking to His own among Moslems to-day, but many have never heard of Him. There are more than two hundred million Moslems in the world. "How can they hear without a preacher?"

Hindiyea's story will also interest you. A Moslem woman lay dying in a coast town of old Syro-Phœnicia. She was the wife of an aged Kâtib—the scribe of the town and the teacher of the Koran. The woman knew that her end was near, but how could she die? Where was she going? Her husband had no word of comfort for her, he did not know. She was greatly troubled and deep waters rolled over her soul. Who could tell her? Was there no one to stretch out a helping hand?

Suddenly she thought of a foreign lady, a mis-

sionary, who was at the time in her own town, and whose words had once strangely stirred her heart. Perhaps she would come to her? She did come and on her entering the room, Hindîjea, endued with new strength and wonderful energy, sat up in her bed and called out in a loud voice, her great eyes shining like stars: "Welcome! Welcome! a thousand times welcome! I need you now, can you teach me how to die? Will you come and put your hands on my head and bring down God's blessing upon me? Surely you can help me."

Hindîyea was told just in time the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and went home to God. Christ came for others just like her in the great Moslem world. Who will go to teach them how to die and how to live?

There is a general belief among Christians that Moslems worship the One True God—the Almighty God; but this is a mistake, they do not worship Him at all! They worship the God who has Mohammed for his prophet and *who is he?* Certainly not the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The call that goes up from thousands of minarets all over the Moslem world six times a day—"There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet,—is in direct conflict with the Word of Truth, that we have access to our God through His Son, Jesus Christ, for they deny the Son,—"and this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath

life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John v. 11, 12).

"Who is the liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ. This is the Anti-Christ, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son the same hath not the Father: he that confesseth the Son hath the Father also" (1 John ii. 22, 23).

In direct contradiction to this teaching of the New Testament is Chapter CXII of the Koran, which, in Sale's translation, is as follows: "My God is one God, the eternal God, He begetteth not, neither is He begotten, and there is not any one like unto Him." Also in Chapter XIX: "It is not meet for God that he should have any Son, God forbid!" Chapter CXII is held in particular veneration by the Mohammedan world and declared by the tradition of their prophet to be equal in value to a third part of the whole Koran. Wherever Islam prevails, or exists, Christ is denied to be the Son of God. All Moslems deny also the death on the Cross and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is a clarion call to-day for prayer, prayer for the Moslem World. When the Christians of evangelical lands begin to pray, the walls of the strongholds of the enemy will fall, and the chains that have bound millions of souls for one thousand three hundred years will be broken.

Islam's only hope is to know God, "the Only True God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent."

XIII

ONCE MORE IN PALESTINE

THE condition of all Moslem women must necessarily be more or less sad (for under the very best conditions it can never be secure), yet I think that the lot of Moslem women in Palestine compares favorably with that of their sisters in India. There is less absolute cruelty. There are fewer atrocious customs. The lot of widows is easier, and girls are not altogether despised.

Polygamy is lawful, yet this custom is certainly decreasing with education and civilization. The Turks have very seldom more than one wife. My experience of the officials who come from Turkey to hold office in Palestine, both civil and military, tells me that it is now the fashion among enlightened Moslems to follow European ways in the matter of marriage, and I observe that, when men are educated and have travelled, they seldom care for a plurality of wives.

However, among the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Palestine men with more than one wife, both rich and poor, may still be found.

Among the uneducated rich men (and by the term uneducated, I mean those who have not completed

their studies in Egypt or Europe) you will often find one having two wives. Also among the land-owners, or sheikhs of villages, who travel from place to place to overlook their property, you will be told that they have a wife in each village living with a suitable retinue of servants. The Arabic word for the second wife means "the one that troubles me." This word is used in 1 Samuel i. in the story of Hannah, and is translated "adversary." I know of an educated gentleman, living in a large city, who added a young bride to his family, but his first wife was treated with every consideration. The rich can afford to put their wives in different suites of apartments with different servants, and by this means quarrelling is prevented; but the case is very different among the poor.

Not long ago a sad case came under my own notice. A prosperous pharmacist was married to a very nice woman, and they were a happy couple with sons and daughters growing up around them. By degrees, the wife perceived a change in her husband's temper. If anything went wrong, he immediately threatened her, not with divorce, but to introduce a second wife into their happy home. This threat he finally carried out, and the wife had the chagrin of welcoming the bride, and she was obliged to behave pleasantly over the business. These two women appear to live in harmony, there is no alternative, for over the first wife Damocles' sword hangs but by a hair. But you can imagine

the bitterness in her heart, her anger against the husband, and her hatred of the bride. You can imagine also the loss of respect for their father which the sons will feel.

Among the poorer classes it is the usual thing to find a man with two wives. One of these is old. She acts as housekeeper, and is consulted and considered by the husband. The other is usually quite a young woman, who must obey the older wife and treat her as a mother-in-law. These two are generally fairly happy, and, as a rule, live in peace. I have seen a man with three wives, all under the same roof. He acts impartially to all—but the quarrelling among themselves and among their children in his absence is very sad. The effect of polygamy upon the home is most disastrous. What effect it may have on the domestic happiness of the man I cannot say, but one can make a guess and that not a very favorable one!

Divorce is easy, inexpensive, and very prevalent; and it is no uncommon thing to hear that a man has had ten or eleven wives and that a woman has had eight or nine husbands. For an angry man to say the words, "I divorce you," and to repeat them three times, swearing an oath by the Prophet, is enough to oblige the object of his wrath to leave his house; carrying with her a bed, a pillow, a coverlet, and a saucepan, together with the clothes which she had from her own family at her marriage. She returns to her father's house, or to the nearest rela-

tion she has, should he be dead, until another marriage is arranged for her.

Among the richer classes divorce seldom occurs; and, if the wife has children and devotes herself to the comfort of her husband, she may feel her position tolerably secure. Should she fall ill, however, it is rare that a husband permits her to remain in his house, for he has not promised to cherish her in sickness and in health. He will send her to her own family till he sees how the illness will turn; and, more than probably, she will be told in less than a month that she is divorced, and that her husband has married another. How often in our Palestine hospitals do we try to comfort and soothe the poor sick women in their feverish anxiety to get well, for fear of this dreaded Damocles' sword falling on their unhappy heads!

Among the poorer classes divorce is extremely prevalent. If a woman has no child, she is immediately divorced, and is returned to her own family, who arrange for a second marriage, generally in about ten days from the time she is divorced. Should she again have no child, her lot will indeed be a sad one. She must then be content to be the wife of some blind or crippled man, who, perhaps, will also exact a sum of money from her relations for his charity in marrying her. If a woman be divorced after she has had children, she must leave them with the husband, to be probably harshly treated by her successor or successors. If the father

dies, the children are supported by his brothers or relations, while the widow marries again. It is seldom that a widow is permitted to take a child, or children, to her new home. There is no difficulty in providing for orphan girls; they are much sought after in marriage, for the law excuses a young man from foreign military service if he can prove that his wife is an orphan. This means that he would not be able to leave her alone during his absence. Such orphans are generally taken into the houses of their future husbands as little tiny girls of four or five years old, where they are trained by the mother-in-law, and grow up as daughters. By this means the husband is exempt from paying any sum of money for his bride.

We must not forget that the marriages of Moslems are wholly without affection, and that the only way in which the husband can enforce obedience from his ignorant and listless wife is by the law of divorce. She will obey him and work for him simply from the fear of being turned away. When a woman has been divorced four or five times, she finds a difficulty in getting a husband; for the report spreads that it "takes two to make a quarrel," that her tongue is too sharp and her temper too short. I have been asked what becomes eventually of the woman who has been frequently divorced. Finally she remains with the old or very poor man who has married her in her old age. Or, possibly, if she is a widow with a grown-up son, he will sup-

port her until death relieves him of what he feels to be only a burden. The insecurity of a Moslem wife's position quite precludes any improvement in herself, her household arrangements, or in her children's training. She does not care to sew, or to take an interest in her husband's work. She does not economize, or try to improve his position, for fear that, if he should find himself with a little spare money, he would immediately enlarge his borders by taking another wife! Therefore, a Moslem woman's house is always poor-looking and untidy. She keeps her husband's clothes the same, that he may not be able to associate with wealthy men and envy their pleasures. Here we see the wide gulf between Christianity and Islam. The wife, whom God gave to be the "help," and whose price is far above rubies, has been debased by the prophet Mohammed, into the "chattel" to be used, and when worn out, thrown away!

The Christian woman's home in Palestine is generally clean and tidy. Her interests are identical with those of her husband. She is glad to work to help the man, that the position of both may be improved.

I do not think the rich man ill-treats his wife. I have found him invariably kind and indulgent. In Palestine the women have plenty of liberty. It is a mistake to say that they are shut up. To begin with, they live in large houses with gardens and courtyards enclosed. They go out visiting one

A VILLAGE SCHOOL IN SYRIA

MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN GIRLS
READING TOGETHER

for nearly eighteen years and know something of their sad lives.

A Moslem girl is unwelcome at her birth and oppressed throughout her life. When a child is born in a family the first question asked is, "Is it a boy or girl?" If the answer is, "A boy," congratulations follow from friends and neighbors. But if the answer is, "A girl," all commiserate the mother in words such as, "God have mercy on thee."

As the little one grows up she has to learn her place as inferior to her brothers, and that she must always give in to them and see the best of everything given to them.

I am glad to say that Christian missions have made it possible for her to go to school if she lives in a town. But at the age of ten she is probably taken away from her mother, the only real friend she is likely to have in the world, and sold by her male relations into another family where she becomes what is virtually a servant to her mother-in-law. We know that mothers-in-law even in England have not always a good name, but what may they be to a young girl completely under their power? Many are the sad stories I have heard of constant quarrelling, followed on the part of the little bride by attempts to run away to her old home, and the advent of her relations on the scene of strife, to patch up a reconciliation and induce the girl to submit to her fate.

Perhaps you say, "Why does her husband not

protect his wife from unkindness, does he not care for her?" There you strike upon the root of a Moslem woman's unhappiness. The boy husband has no choice in his bride, has probably never set eyes on her until the marriage day. He seems to care little about her beyond making use of her. She is to be his attendant to serve him and provide him with sons. As to the first, I have watched one of these girls in a merchant's house in Jerusalem standing in attendance on her young husband's toilet, handing him whatever he wanted, and folding up his thrown-off clothes. But I looked in vain for the least sign of kindly recognition of her attentions from him in look or word or deed. The Moslem thinks it beneath his dignity to speak to his wife except to give orders, and does not answer her questions. It is not customary for them to sit down to meals together, and as for going for a walk together it would be scandalous! One must not even ask a man after his wife in public and she may not go out to visit friends without his permission, and then veiled so thickly as to be unrecognizable. The higher her social rank the greater the seclusion for a Moslem woman.

Then, as to her motherhood. The young wife's thoughts are continually directed to the importance of pleasing her husband and avoiding the corporal punishment which accompanies his anger. If she does not bear him a son she is in danger of divorce or of the arrival of a co-wife brought to the house.

It is strange that the latter trial seems to be faced preferably to the former, which is a great disgrace.

A Moslem wife has no title until she has a son, and then she is called the "mother of so-and-so," instead of being called by the name of her husband. But she soon regrets the day he was born, for he defies her authority and repulses her embraces. I have seen a boy of four years old go into the street to bring a big stone to throw at his mother with curses! The mothers soon age. Their chief pleasures are smoking and gossip.

Their religion is very scanty. Some know the Moslem form of worship with its prostrations and genuflexions. Most of them know the names of the chief prophets, including that of Jesus Christ, and believe that Mohammed's intercession will rescue them from hell. I once asked a rich Moslem lady what was woman's portion in paradise, but she did not know.

Does this little description stir your pity? Are we to leave these, our sisters, alone to their fate? To suffer not only in this life but also in the life to come? If you saw their daily life, and knew the peace of GOD yourself, I think you would want to do something to cheer them, by telling them Christ loves them too, and that there is a great future before them in Him and His Gospel.

XIV

MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN IN SYRIA

SYRIA is one of the countries bound down by the heavy chain which Mohammedanism binds on the East. The weight of this chain presses most heavily on that which is weakest and least capable of resistance, and that means the hearts of the women who are born into this bondage.

There are probably from 1,200,000 to 1,500,000 Mohammedans in Syria, and this estimate also includes the sects of the Nusairiyeh (the mountain people in North Syria), the Metawileh, and the Druzes, who, though differing in many ways from the true Mohammedans, are yet classed with them politically. When the word "Christian" is used in this chapter it should be understood as distinguishing a person or a sect which is neither Jew, Druse, or Mohammedan, and does not necessarily imply, as with us, a true spiritual disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our purpose is to show the condition of the Mohammedan and Druze women in Syria to-day as far as it has been possible to ascertain the facts which have been gleaned from those most qualified to give them. From a casual survey one may very likely

come to the conclusion that conditions in Syria are better and the lives of the women brighter than their co-religionists in other Mohammedan lands. There are happy homes (or so they seem at first sight) where there is immaculate cleanliness, where the mother looks well after the ways of her household and her children, is ready to receive her husband and kiss his hand when he returns from his work, where there is but one wife, and a contented and indulgent husband and father. When you come to look more closely you will find in almost every case that more or less light has come into these homes from Christian teaching or example. There are many instances on record of Mohammedan men testifying that the girls trained in Christian schools make the best wives. More than once have they come to thank and bless the Protestant teachers who have taught to their pupils such lessons of neatness, gentleness, obedience, and self-control. There are many Mohammedan men who are worthy to have refined, educated wives, and can appreciate the blessing of the homes such are capable of making. On the other hand, however, there is a very large proportion who need to be educated themselves in order to know how to treat such women and who have the deserved reputation of being brutal, sensual, unspeakably vile in language and behavior. Many of these belong to the better class in the large inland cities. The women who are at the mercy of the caprices and passions of such men are very greatly to be pitied.

In the towns along the coast, where there is more enlightenment; the women have more freedom and seem outwardly happier than those who are more strictly secluded in the towns where Mohammedanism is the predominant influence. Freedom, however, is used as a comparative term, for the following was told to me to show what privileges are accorded under that name to the upper-class women in one of the smaller coast cities. They are allowed to go often, every day if they like, and sit by the graves in the Mohammedan cemetery. When you consider the fact that they are shrouded in their long "covers" or cloaks, with faces veiled, and that the cemetery is not a cheerful place, to say the least, and that it is the only place where they are allowed to go, this so-called "freedom" does not seem to be so very wonderful, after all. However, it is far better than being shut indoors all the time.

Any one living among these people becomes gradually accustomed to the accepted state of things, especially when one has learned that outside interference only makes matters worse, and it is only now and then when some especially sad or heart-rending thing comes to your knowledge that you realize how truly dreadful the whole system is. The other day I was talking about this with a friend whose knowledge of Mohammedan women had been confined to a few families who on the outside would compare very favorably with Christian families she knew, as re-

A FAMILY GROUP AT JERICHO

gards comfort, cleanliness, and contentment. I agreed with her that there were many of the nominal Christian families where there certainly was great unhappiness. But one must not, in comparing the two, lose sight of the bitterest, darkest side. No Christian woman has to contend with the fact that if her husband wearies of her, or some carelessness displeases him, he is perfectly at liberty to cast her off as he would toss aside an old shoe. In fact he would use the same expression in speaking of his shoe, of a dog, some loathsome object, the birth of a daughter or of his wife,—an expression of apology for referring to such contaminating subjects. Nor does a Christian woman fear that as the years pass and her beauty fades, or her husband prospers, that one day he will cause preparations to be made and bring a new wife home. The Mohammedans have a proverb that a man's heart is as hard as a blow from the elbow, and that his love lasts not more than two months.

A Mohammedan friend was telling me of a woman she knew and was fond of. "She was a good wife and mother," she said, "and she was very happy with her two children, a boy and a girl; her husband seemed to love her, for she is not old, and it was a great surprise to her when he told her one day that he was going to marry another wife, for she had forgotten that it might be. He said he would take a separate room for the new wife. She said nothing—what could she say? But

he deceived her, for he only took the room for the new wife for one week, and then he brought her to live with the first wife. And now she weeps all the time, and oh! how unhappy they all are! I tell her not to weep, for her husband will weary of her and divorce her." A shadow crossed the face of my friend as she spoke, and I could see she was thinking of her own case, and fearing the fear of all Mohammedan women. "Why did that man take another wife when he was happy and had children?" I asked, for I knew that where there are no children a man feels justified in divorcing his wife, or taking a second, third, or fourth. "He wanted more children. Two were not enough."

Can there be any real happiness for a Mohammedan woman? She gets little comfort from her religion, although if she is a perfectly obedient wife, attends faithfully to her religious duties, and does not weep if her child dies, she has a hope that she may be one of seventy houris who will have the privilege of attending upon her lord and master in his sensual paradise. The idea of these two horrors, divorce and other wives to share her home, is constantly before her.

A Protestant woman recently told me that she had let some of her rooms to a Mohammedan family from Hums. The man was intelligent and the wife was an attractive young woman with a little girl. The man told her in the presence of his wife that when he went back to Hums he thought he should

take another wife. "Why do you do that when you are so happy as you are? Think of your wife—how unhappy it would make her to have you bring in another!" The man laughed and told her that she made a great mistake in thinking that Mohammedan women were like Christian women, that they did not mind having another woman in the house, they were accustomed to it and brought up to expect it. "But I hope that what I said will make him think and perhaps he will decide not to take another wife, for I showed him plainly the evil of it."

The women may be brought up to expect it,—they may have been the members of a polygamous family themselves,—but the human heart is the same the world over, and the sanctity of the home with one wife is never invaded without poignant suffering. A wealthy Mohammedan will establish each of his wives in a separate house, those not able to afford this luxury have their harem in one house. It does not require a very vivid imagination to be able to picture the inevitable result: jealousies, heart-burnings, contentions, wranglings, and worse.

A Bible woman told me of dreadful scenes where the women fight like cats and dogs, and the husband takes the part of the wife he loves the best and beats the others. One feels that the man often bears his own punishment for this state of things by being obliged to live amid such scenes.

In a city of Northern Syria where the Mohammedans are the most powerful class and their

haughtiness and contempt of women so great that they will elbow a foreign woman into the gutter, not necessarily because she is a Christian, but because she is a woman, a Syrian woman whispered during a walk: "Look at that man over there, I'll tell you about him later." And afterwards she explained that the man was a neighbor and he had just taken his fourth wife, and she was only ten years old. He was an elderly man with gray hair.

One well-known and wealthy Mohammedan had splendid establishments in four different places and he is said to have had thirty sons. Another brought home an English wife, with whom he had lived ten years in England, and established her in an apartment just above the one in which one of several wives was living. Could English girls realize the misery in store for them in marrying Mohammedan husbands, they would be thankful for any warning. Even if the husband himself is kind, there are many painful things to undergo from his women relatives. And worse than all is the denying of Christ before men in the acceptance of Islam. One of these English women living in Syria as the wife of a Mohammedan, had her daughter married to an own cousin at the age of thirteen, another was obliged to give her ten-year-old daughter in marriage. I asked this last woman how she could do such a thing. "It is her father's will and I could do nothing." But she ran away the next day, so the man divorced her. This same daughter has been married and divorced

twice since then, and is now living at home, and is at the head of a Mohammedan school for girls. Two other sisters have been divorced, and are at home, one with her child.

In Beirut, among the better classes girls are not married as young as they used to be, though occasionally you hear of instances, as in the case of a woman who had eight daughters and married two of them, twins, at the age of eight. She gained nothing by this cruel act as they were soon divorced and sent home. One reason for child-marriages among Mohammedans in Syria is the conscription which demands for the army every young man of eighteen. The one who cannot afford to escape conscription by paid substitutes or money may be exempt if he has a wife dependent upon him. When he is sixteen or seventeen his family send off to some distant town for a young girl who is a destitute orphan, and this child is married to the youth,—she may be ten years old, or nine, or even eight, and cases are known where a girl of seven has been married to a boy of sixteen.

One can hardly wonder that many of these girls are divorced, for they are simply untrained, naughty children, unable to grasp what the duties of a wife are, or that it is necessary to please their husbands or conciliate their mothers-in-law. Mohammedan women say that the happiness of a child-wife and her status in the family depend almost entirely upon her mother-in-law. It is a sad fact that these little

brides—children in years—are very often old in knowledge of evil. Most Mohammedan children are brought up in an atmosphere of such talk that their natures seem steeped in vulgarity from their cradles and no mystery of life or death is hidden from them.

It makes one's heart sick to think of these children, so sinned against and so cruelly treated for being the products of this system. Sad stories are told of those who are put out to service, especially when they go to Turkish families. It is not very common, fortunately, for there is always the fear that the men in the family, regarding them as lawful prey, will ill-treat them. Girls disgraced in this way have a terrible fate.

A friend came to us one day, weeping because of a dreadful thing which had just come to her knowledge, too late, alas! for any help to be given. The daughter of a neighbor, a poor man, had been sent out to service, and the worst befell her. She was sent home in disgrace,—her father was obliged to receive her, but he would not recognize her or have anything to do with her till one day he ordered her to go out into the garden and dig in a spot he indicated. Each day he came to see what she had accomplished, till at last there was a hole deep enough for her to stand in, her full height. Her father then called his brothers, they brought lime, poured it over her, and then buried the child alive in the hole she herself had dug. She was only twelve years old! The neighbors found it out and informed the

government. The parents and all concerned were imprisoned, and the father is still in prison, though the mother has been released.

The feeling is strong that such a disgrace can only be wiped out by death, and this is especially the case when there has been misconduct between a Mohammedan man and a Christian woman. In a Syrian city a Christian girl of aristocratic family was betrothed and was soon to be married when suddenly the engagement was broken. It could no longer be hidden that she had been guilty of wrong relations with some man, and the man proved to have been a Mohammedan. This disgrace was intolerable to the families involved, and before long a man connected with the family came to the girl with a glass of liquid, and said: "Here, drink this!" She took it, drank, and died. Comments on it showed that the sentiment of the community is in sympathy with such a course. "What else could be done?" they say.

Probably a Mohammedan would not see the inconsistency of condemning to death the child-victim of a man's lust, as in the first instance given, while practically the same thing is legalized in allowing the marriage of children with the probability of a divorce in the near future. How can they hope for the growth of purity among their women, or wonder when immorality and unchastity are discovered!

Frequent reference has been made to divorce. It is the weapon always at hand when a man is dis-

satisfied. His law allows him to divorce his wife twice and take her back, but if he divorce her the third time, he may not take her back until she has been married to another man and divorced by him. The ceremony is a simple one; repeating a formula three times in the presence of a witness not a member of the household, and telling the wife to go to her father.

A divorced wife must go back to her father's house, or to her brother if her father is not living, or to her nearest relative. If she is friendless then she has the right to go before the Mejlis or Court, and state her case. She is asked if she wishes to marry again, and if so, the Court must find a husband for her. If not, then the husband is made to support her. If she returns to live with her friends, the husband has to give her one penny halfpenny a day. If there are children under seven they go with the mother. If they are older, they are allowed to choose between mother and father. They are supported by the father.

The Mohammedans have a saying that when a woman marries she is never sure that she will not be returned, scorned and insulted, to her father's house the next day; nor, when she prepares a meal for her husband, is she sure that she will be his wife long enough to eat of it herself.

In conversation with a Mohammedan woman one day we were commenting on the fact that a certain wealthy bridegroom had given directions to the pro-

fessional who was to adorn his bride for her marriage, not to disfigure her face with the thick shining paste which is usually considered (though very mistakenly) to enhance her charms. He was reported to have said that he wished to see her face as God had made it. I remarked that I thought it was very sensible and that I did not see what was ever gained by disfiguring a face by plastering it with paint and powders. The woman said: "But you do not understand! We do it so that we may be beautiful in our husband's eyes, for if we are pale or wrinkled they cease to love us and go to other women or else they divorce us." It is very far from being "for better, for worse,—in sickness, in health."

It is impossible to gather statistics as to the proportionate number of divorces. All the women say, "It is very common." The condition of a divorced woman returned to her father's house is not an enviable one. In some cases they are kept on like servants, living in some out-house or stable, or in some inferior room if the house is a grand one. It has been suggested by a writer, that the sight of the misery of these positionless women has a strong influence upon the young men of the family, making them determine that they will never have more than one wife. Let us hope that this is true. From what is told me I have learned that it is not usually the young men who have more than one wife, but the older ones. I must not omit to say that in the smaller Mohammedan settlements where there is

much intermarrying in families, there is almost no divorce, for even if a man wishes it, he must be very courageous to brave the united wrath of the whole circle of female relatives or of his enraged uncle or cousin, who resents bitterly having his daughter sent back to her home.

Among the poorer people, too, those who have come most closely under my observation, divorce is rare and no man has more than one wife. But they are steeped in superstition and many are so bigoted they will not receive the visits of the Bible woman nor allow their children to attend schools. Frequently, in paying visits, we will find a blind Mohammedan sheikh instructing the women in the Koran, and some of them have very glib objections to offer to the New Testament stories and truths we read to them. They will often ask to be read to, but the Old Testament is the favorite book.

Among the Druzes, divorce is even more common than it is among the true Mohammedans, and the state of morals is very low. The Druzes are an interesting, even fascinating people. They live on the Lebanons and inland on the Druze mountains of the Hauran, and are a warlike independent race, of fine physique, and most polished, courteous manners. Some of their women are very beautiful and their peculiar costumes are most becoming and picturesque. They are always veiled, but one eye is uncovered, and it is second nature with them to draw their veils hastily across their faces if a man

appears in sight. As was said before, they are classed with the Mohammedans although they have their own prophet, Hakim, and they take pride in having their own secret religion, which is little more than a brotherhood for political purposes. It is extremely difficult to make any real impression on them.

At a recent wedding in Druze high life in a Lebanon village almost every woman present had been divorced, and one woman was exactly like the Samaritan woman who came to the well to draw water: she had had five husbands, and the one she had now was not her husband. The hostess herself, the bridegroom's mother, a woman of fine presence, had been divorced, but was brought back to preside over this important function, as there was no one else to do it, but her former husband was not present, as Druze law forbids a man ever looking again on the face of his divorced wife. Their women are cast off in a most heartless way, but they cannot be taken back again. The ceremony of marriage consists in fastening up over a door a sword wreathed with flowers and with candles tied on it, and then passing under it.

The form of divorce is very simple. It is illustrated in the life of a Druze prince who married a girl of high family, beautiful and of a strong character and fine mind. They were devoted to each other, but she had no children. She had suspicions of what was in store for her, which were realized one

day when she had been on a visit to her native village with her husband. They were riding together towards home, when they came to a fork in the road.

The prince turned and said: "Here is the parting of the way." She understood, and turned, weeping, back to her father's house. The prince afterwards sent and bought a beautiful Circassian slave, and married her, but she had no children, and so she in turn was divorced. The prince had, contrary to custom, been in the habit of paying visits to the house of his first wife who had been married to another man, and now he obliged her second husband to divorce her. He turned Mohammedan in order to be able to take his wife back again.

Among the Druzes, the ladies of good family are secluded even more rigorously than in Mohammedan families. Even in the villages they rarely leave their homes, going out only at night to pay visits to women of equal station. Some of them have never been outside of their own doors since they were little girls. One girl, the daughter of an Emir, was sent away to spend a year in a Protestant boarding-school. There she was allowed to go for walks with the girls, attended the church services, and had a glimpse into a life very different from the dull seclusion which would naturally be her lot among her own people. But she failed to take home the lessons taught her that Christ was her Saviour and Friend, and would be her help and comfort in whatever was hard to bear. She returned to her

home and soon learned that, although she had been allowed these unusual privileges, she need expect no more liberty than her mother had been allowed before her. She found the shut-in life so intolerable that she secretly ate the heads of matches and poisoned herself so that she sickened and died, having confessed her act and telling the reason.

There are others among these girls who have been taught in evangelical schools, who have learned to love Christ, whose faith is strong and whose trust sustains them and keeps them patient and cheerful amid very great trials and even cruel treatment from their husbands, "Strengthened in their endurance by the vision of the Invisible God."

To go back to Mohammedan women. It is surprising how exceedingly ignorant many of them are, even the women of the higher classes from whom you might expect better things. A visitor inquired of her Mohammedan hostess if she would tell her the name of the current Mohammedan month. "I do not concern myself with such things, you must ask the Effendi." Their minds seem to be blank except in regard to their relations to their families, to sleeping, eating, and diseases, to their clothes, and their servants, and the current gossip of the neighborhood. Formerly it was not believed that girls were capable of learning anything, and years ago an Effendi in Tripoli, when urged to have his daughter taught to read, exclaimed, "Teach a girl to read! I should as soon try to teach a cat!" But those

days are passing and the Mohammedans are beginning to bestir themselves in the matter of educating their girls. They are opening schools for girls in all the cities, though judging from the attainments of some of the teachers, the girls are not taught very much. When these schools were first opened in Beirut, the only available teachers were girls who had been in attendance on the Protestant schools, and some of them had only been there a few months.

In Sidon there is a large Mohammedan school for girls, where are gathered from five to six hundred girls. The Koran is the text-book, reading and writing are taught and needle-work has a large place in the curriculum.

Years ago an old Effendi was attending the examination in Miss Taylor's school for Mohammedan and Druze girls. "My two granddaughters are here," he said to a missionary sitting beside him. "I was instrumental in starting a school of our own for girls, and I took my granddaughters away from here and put them in the new school. One day I went to visit the school. When I was still at a distance I heard the teacher screaming at the girls and cursing them, saying, 'May God curse the beard of your grandfathers, you dogs!' Now, I was the grandfather of two of those children and I knew they heard enough of such language at home without being taught it at school, so I brought them back to this good place."

The aim of the Mohammedans in their schools is

twofold: being both to benefit and train the girls, making them more companionable, and also to fortify them against Christian teaching. The aim of our work and our teaching is more than that, for we desire, not only to enlarge the mental horizon but to cultivate the heart, to open up for them the wellspring of true joy and store their memories with hymns of praise and the inspiring and comforting words of Christ. But more than all to lead them to accept for themselves their only Saviour, the Son of God, who died for them, who only is the true "Prophet of the Highest," whose mission is "to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." We claim for these dear women and girls the liberty which their own sacred Koran inculcates: "Let there be no compulsion in religion." (From the Sura called "The Cow," v. 257.)

And will the favored Christian women of England, America, and Germany, and all free Christian lands not join those already on the field either in prayer or personal service, that they may have a part in bringing many of these Mohammedan women, sweet and lovable, and capable of rising to high levels as many of them are, out of their "darkness into His Marvellous Light"?

XV

BEHIND THE LATTICE IN TURKEY

If the condition of women under Islam is degraded and wellnigh hopeless in other parts of the world, what must be the condition of such women in Turkey, the seat of Moslem power, the centre of the Caliphate, with the green flag of the Prophet kept at Seraglio Point, in Constantinople?

The picture of woman's degradation throughout the Empire is black enough, yet gleams of light play over the blackness, and these gleams grow steadily stronger and more frequent. Turkey not only borders upon Europe, and thus is nearer to Western civilization and its progress, but its extended coast-line affords many ports of entry, to which comes no inconsiderable part of the travel and trade of the world. Kaiser William's railroads are opening up the western portion of the empire, and cause a curious jumble of modern advance with so-called fixed Oriental ways.

With their parasols held low over their heads, even though the day be cloudy, or the sun be set, the veiled and costumed Turkish women may be seen in crowds on Friday, their Sabbath, and holidays, sitting upon grassy slopes, with their children play-

ing about them. They go in groups or followed by a servant, if from richer families, as they are not trusted to go alone. In the interior, even, non-Moslem women are veiled almost as closely as the Mohammedans, when upon the street. Such is the power of prejudice that it is not thought proper for any woman to be seen in public.

They live behind their lattices, and woe to any Christian house whose windows command a view into a Moslem neighbor's premises, no matter how distant. Such juxtaposition is the reason for the unsightly walls and lofty screens which disfigure many an otherwise beautiful view, in any part of Turkey. No strange man may look upon any Moslem woman.

The slow but sure disintegration of these customs, prejudices, and superstitions, is going on, thank God! Darkness is fleeing before the light. If the churches of Christ will but take the watchword, "The Moslem world for Christ, in this century!" and put all needed resources of men and means, consecrated energy and prayer, into the campaign, even the False Prophet shall be vanquished before Him who is King of kings and Lord of lords!

I have travelled on the railroad in Turkey with Moslem women, in the special compartment, where in the freedom of the day's travel, they have thrown back their veils and silken wraps, showing their pretty French costumes and the diamonds upon their fingers, as they offered their Frank fellow-

traveller cake, or possibly chocolates, and have more than once felt the embarrassment of a missionary purse too slender to allow of such luxuries, with which to return the compliment. Once a Moslem woman took from her travelling hand-basket paper and pencil, and proceeded to write, as I was doing! Page after page she wrote, though in just the reverse manner from our writing, and we soon established a feeling of comradeship.

I have been also a deeply sympathetic witness of moving scenes in which the proverbial love of the Turkish father for his children could not be concealed. As the train awaited the signal for departure from a station, one day, the evident distress of a pretty girl opposite me, broke into crying. She had climbed into the corner by the window, and the guard had not yet closed the door. Involuntarily my eyes followed the child's grieved gaze, until they rested upon a tall, gray-bearded Turkish officer standing by the station, who was evidently striving to control his emotion answering to the grief of the child. Finally he yielded to the heart-broken crying of the little one, and came to the car door to speak soothingly to her. The young mother sat stoically through it all, seemingly content with her rich dress and jewels, and her comfortable appointments for travelling. Not so with the father and his child, who were so grieved over their coming separation. When finally the door had been slammed by the guard, and locked, and our journey

begun, some time elapsed before the still grieving child could be won to take any interest in the good things with which her mother then sought to beguile her. Surely such a human father, so tender toward his little child, could be taught the love of our Heavenly Father for each child of His, which has provided a Saviour for every repenting soul returning to Him! Thus the lion would be changed into the lamb, and the Turkish officer, often unspeakably cruel to his enemies, would become a man and a brother even to his foes.

Moslem women, although by the rules of their religion almost entirely secluded from the outer world, and from all men save those of their own families, are, nevertheless, being powerfully affected by the growing light of civilization, which has not only revealed their darkness, but has penetrated it to some degree, while the burning glow and love of Christianity, through zenana workers and schools, has far more than begun the work of transformation.

How can mothers consent that their daughters shall be sold, while yet children, to any man, no matter how old, who will pay the price her father demands for her, when she has learned even a little of the loving honor given to his wife and daughter by the Christian husband and father? How can she consent to see her given in a marriage to which her approval has not even been asked, or possibly where it has been refused? Yet, pity it is that without the

consent of mother or girl, she may be conveyed, a bride, to the house of her lord, who has perhaps not deigned to be present,—and she of course not,—at the arrangement by their legal representatives, for signing the contract, and fixing the amount of dowry which she brings, or the sum which he shall give her in case he at any time shall decree her divorce. This is all that constitutes the marriage ceremony in Turkey. I once saw the arrival of a Turkish bride at her bridegroom's house. There was no welcome. She alighted with a woman friend from the closed carriage. Some one must have waited within the garden, for the heavy street-gate opened at their approach, received the women, closed upon them, and the bride was shut into her husband's house, from all the world. If she displeases him in any way, even if her cooking does not suit him, a word from her husband suffices to divorce a wife, according to Moslem law. He may have as many wives as he wishes, and another is easily found.

Mohammedan husbands are allowed to punish their wives with blows, to enforce obedience. A whole town pervaded by these Turkish ideas was filled with amazement at a burly non-Moslem friend of mine, whose wife had become a Christian. Although jeered at and ridiculed by his companions as one who could not make his wife obey him, he never lifted his hand against her, for he loved her too well. He did, however, cause her great unhap-

piness for years, until the Spirit of God broke his hard heart, and made him also a Christian.

No Turk expects a woman to speak to him in a public place, or if she does he will not raise his eyes from the ground. A friend of mine was in deepest distress in a lonely place in Turkey, wringing her hands and crying "Alas! Alas!" as she saw a man approaching her; but Agha Effendim gave her no heed until she walked straight up to him, so sore was her need, and told him her trouble. Then his heart was touched, and Mohammedan Albanian as he was, he rendered her the aid which she asked.

Forty Mohammedan women, living too distant from Mecca to allow a pilgrimage thither, made the ascent, one summer, of one of the loftiest mountain peaks in European Turkey. They did this as a religious duty. It was a feat which required all the vigor and strength of an American mountain-climber, who ascended the same peak some days later. She could not abandon the task, however, which they had accomplished, whose feet knew only the heelless slipper or the wooden clog, when about their household duties, or stepped noiselessly in their gaily embroidered homemade stockings, when indoors. *The Turkish woman can climb.* She can reach lofty heights. Slowly and painfully she will leave her dense ignorance, her habits of superstition, her jealousies, and her intrigues behind her and will emerge, led by the loving hand of her

Christian sister, sometimes of her husband or child, into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

We admit that ofttimes the obstacles seem insuperable, when we meet the barrier of the unawakened life. What opportunity is there before the little mother but fourteen years old herself? How shall she escape the name which her own family perhaps give her—"a cow"? "Cattle" is a common term for women. Her men-folks will very likely hinder her education, in many instances, but she must be led out of her old life, along this way. The mothers of coming generations, with unlimited influence over their husband's inclination and conduct even when set toward progress—the Turkish woman *must* be reached! Christianity is the one means to allay her superstitions, her jealousies, her fears, and to give her a true outlook upon life and its meaning. The women of Christendom must help her who cannot help herself. The pitifulness of the condition of Turkish women, and the difficulty of reaching them, form the challenge of Islam to the Christian world. Shall we take up the gauntlet thrown down by the Crescent and the Star, and lifting high the banner of the Cross, go forward in Christ's name, because God wills their salvation as truly as ours, and sends us to them in His name?

The influence of civilization is necessarily felt far less in the interior of Turkey than in the maritime sections; yet here also, thanks to the multipli-

cation of schools and teachers and loving Christian women trained in those schools, conditions are beginning to be changed. "In one city of western Turkey," we are told, "the Turks themselves asked for a kindergarten teacher from our American mission school, to open a kindergarten for them, and it was done. Girls' schools have sprung up among the Moslems in various parts of the country, from the same influences which affected Greeks and Armenians, though more slowly. Quite recently there has been an awakening among the Turks to the fact that if they would keep pace with the march of civilization they must provide for the education of their girls. So now, in some of the large cities, schools for Turkish girls have been established, and, although the attendance is still small and the work elementary, yet it shows the trend of opinion, and gives great hope of soon bettering the condition of women in the empire."

Another observer writes concerning more progressive portions of Turkey: "The power of education is proving a sure disintegrator to the seclusion of Moslem social life. Turkish women have already taken enviable places among the writers of their nation. Others are musicians, physicians, nurses, and a constantly increasing number are availing themselves of the educational facilities afforded by the German, French, and other foreign institutions which have been established at Constantinople, Smyrna, and elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire.

In the beautiful American College for Girls, on the heights of Scutari, Constantinople, Turkish girls, as well as those of all nationalities of the Orient and Franks, eagerly take advantage of the course, and a few have graduated with honor. A far larger number, however, are removed to the seclusion of their homes as they approach maidenhood. On the day when the first six girls from Moslem families were received, more than one of them learned the entire English alphabet. What a need for prayer that the Spirit of God shall reach those receptive young hearts from the very first day, in this and every other Christian educational institution to which Moslem girls turn their steps!" The most tactful and consecrated work of their missionary or native teachers must be done every day, for such Turkish girls, whether in more elementary schools or in colleges, inasmuch as the proverb of the country: "Either marry your daughter at sixteen or bury her!" is still very much in force beyond those limited districts where the influence of Western ideas has availed to modify somewhat the old thought. What they gain during the short time when they may remain in school, must be the food of their lives, in multitudes of instances.

We know the paucity of literature of all kinds in Turkey, where government press regulations prohibit any general output of publications; this, combined with the very general poverty of the people, makes many a home bookless, and the great major-

ity of lives barren. Sometimes in missionary tours we have seen far up on the hillside a group of poor peasants descending. The sudden turning of the women of that party, drawing their filthy veils closer across their faces on hot July or August days, reveals to the passers-by that these are Moslems. They have discovered that there are men in the approaching party of travellers. They may have mistaken the ladies wearing hats as gentlemen also. A command has evidently been given by their lord and master, at which the women have sunk to the ground, with their backs to the road, while still far from it, lest one of those infidel eyes should peer through their veils, and look upon their faces. Yet women's curiosity compels those hidden eyes to seek at least a surreptitious peep at the foreign travellers, and they watch us furtively. Under such circumstances there can be no hope of any personal touch, save if occasion might arise which would allow a call at the hovel which constitutes their home. On one of my last journeys in Turkey I chanced to meet a Turkish soldier on a lonely mountain road. As I passed him, walking in advance of my horse and driver, filled with no small trepidation at such proximity in that lonely place, he gave me no salutation, and I confess to a feeling of relief when I had passed him unchallenged. But how that feeling changed to remorse when my driver overtook me, and said that the soldier had stopped him to inquire if the teacher who had just gone by were a doctor, for a little

child of his lay at home grievously ill. What an opportunity had been missed! If he only had spoken, the pitiful need in that home would have been opened up to the missionary teacher, who, although not a doctor, would have done what she could to relieve the little sufferer, and to comfort the sorrowing parents. There would have been a chance to bring to that poor, ignorant mother in her miserable home, a token of love and tenderness out of the great world of which she knew nothing.

One of the most discouraging aspects of life in Turkey at the present time, is found in the fact that as men travel about in their business or professional life; come into contact in various ways with those of different views and more advanced thought than themselves; become influenced by them; and mildly enthusiastic to put the new ideas into practice; they are met on the very threshold of their homes by their uncomprehending and immovable wives, who with horror refuse to allow the souls of their families to be imperilled by tolerating any such heresies. This difficulty, instead of being cause for discouragement, constitutes a powerful challenge to the heart of Christianity, to help such an awakening man, and to find the dormant soul of this woman. No opposition can long stand before the appeal of the Gospel, when tactfully, lovingly, prayerfully brought to bear upon such souls.

Fatima Khanum ("my Sovereign Fatima"), a Bible woman, seventy years old, finds the joy of the

Lord to be still her strength, as she goes from house to house, telling in her musical Turkish tongue the story of God's love for every man, and urges all to receive it. Very closely they get together on a wintry day, as visitor and visited gather about the brazier of coals, and talk over the wonderful words of life. May God greatly multiply the number of such faithful witnesses for Him, throughout the Turkish Empire!

"Evet, Effendim!" ("yes, my lord!") frequently says a missionary friend who, having learned the Turkish as her missionary language when a young teacher, still cherishes her love for it, and sometimes uses it to her best-beloved. Shall we not say, Yes, Lord! to Him who died on Calvary for all, and who is "not willing that any should perish," and with Him seek those "other sheep," and bring them to the fold of the Good Shepherd? There can be no failure here, although the church of Christ has but slowly and late come to the realization that the Mohammedan world too, with its millions of women and children, must be His. Hath not God said: "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. . . . Unto Me every knee shall bow"?

XVI

A VOICE FROM BULGARIA

I RECEIVED some days ago your letter asking for something upon the condition of Mohammedan women in Bulgaria. My observation has been limited, and I have not had opportunity to learn from others what they had seen, except from our dear old Fatima Hanum, for so many years a Bible woman among Mohammedan women.

Bulgaria cannot be called Turkey. Indeed it is much freer from Turkish influence than Egypt is. There is a free intercourse also between Turkish, Bulgarian, and Armenian women, which must influence the home life and the views of the Mohammedan families. Most of them would be ashamed to take more than one woman, and the Turkish women are continually comparing their situation and life with that of their Christian neighbors. They are sad not to be able to read and write, and they try to give their daughters a better education. But as they see that their (orthodox) Bulgarian neighbors care more for instruction than for religion and real education, they, of course, cannot understand till now, that religion is the root of culture.

Polygamy is by no means prevalent among the

Mohammedans of Bulgaria, indeed it is very rare that a man has more than one wife, but these few exceptions are productive of great misery. Divorce for very trivial reasons is not uncommon, but there has recently occurred under my eye a case of happy reconciliation and restoration through the influence of Christian friends.

The Mohammedan woman of Bulgaria shares to a degree the freedom of her Bulgarian sisters, is a power in the home, and, especially if the mother of grown sons, is much respected and considered. But ignorance is her curse. Here and there one finds a grown woman able to read, but the mass are content to let their girls go to school for a few years and then gradually forget all they have learned. But still I have known some keenly interested in the reading of Scripture. I recall one visit in a roomful of women at the festival of Bairam, when a young girl attracted by the Injil Sherif—the New Testament—in the hands of the Bible woman, opened it and read aloud the whole of the eighteenth chapter of Luke to that roomful of deeply interested listeners. As she finished, clasping the book to her heart, she exclaimed: "Oh, give me this wonderful book, I must read it all." When we left she followed me to the door, reminding us earnestly of our promise to send her a book soon. We know that the book was much read.

Another girl of seventeen, whom Fatima Hanum had taught not only to read but to love the Book,

found great comfort in the prayers and Christian sympathy of this same dear friend during a long illness. On her death-bed she said to her mother: "We have lived in darkness, but there is light and I have seen it!"

We believe the light is beginning to glimmer in more than one Mohammedan home in Bulgaria. In this city, as in many others, Mohammedan women are accustomed to spend Friday, whenever the weather will permit, under the trees in some pleasant spot, and Fatima Hanum with her Bible is a familiar figure among them—indeed they often send word to her: "We are going out for the day. Come with us and bring the Book."

In a recent tour I was a welcome guest in several Turkish homes, and warm approval was expressed by the women of their Protestant neighbors—only one failing was regretted—"they eat pork," but even they acknowledged that it wasn't so bad as telling lies, and saying unkind things about each other; and they begged me to come again and read to them from our Great Teacher's Book.

XVII

DARKNESS AND DAYBREAK IN PERSIA

ONE can never forget the first sight of a Moslem woman—that veiled figure, moving silently through the streets, so enshrouded that face and form are completely concealed. Men and women pass each other with no greeting or token of recognition, and if a wife accompanies her husband, she never walks beside him, but at a respectful distance behind, and neither gives a sign that they belong together.

A woman's first instinct is to efface herself. Even the poor, washing clothes in the street at the water-course, pull their tattered rags over their faces. The Persian expression for women, "those who sit behind the curtain," shows that their place is silence and seclusion. When the closed carriage of a princess passes, her servants, galloping before, order all men to turn their faces to the wall, though all they could possibly see would be carefully veiled figures. The beggar sitting on the ground at the street corner is equally invisible under her cotton *chader,* as with lamentable voice she calls for mercy on the baby in her arms.

During the month of mourning, we often pass a brilliantly lighted mosque, where men sit sipping

tea or smoking, listening to the tale of the death of their martyrs, but crouching on the stony street outside in the darkness, a crowd of women are straining their ears to catch what they can. Such are the passing glimpses one gets of the Persian woman in public.

Her real life is lived in the "harem." We realize its meaning, "the forbidden," when after passing through the imposing street gate, and the outer court where are the men's apartments, we are conducted to a curtained door, guarded by a sentinel, who summons an old eunuch to lead us through a dark, narrow passage into the inner court, or *andaroon.* Here no man may enter but the very nearest relatives of the inmates, and they under severe restrictions. As women, we have free access, and this privilege is shared by the Christian physician, who is welcomed and trusted. One such gives us this picture.

The *andaroon* is usually very far from being an abode of luxury, even in wealthy families, unless the number of wives is limited to one or two. The favorite wife has many advantages over her rivals, but she is usually encouraged to set an example of severe simplicity, in respect to her house and its furnishings, to the other wives; each of whom would make life a burden to her lord, were marked discrimination shown in such things. He, therefore, contents himself with reserving the best of everything for the *beroon,* or outer apartments, where

he receives his own guests. Here are fountains, spacious courts, shady walks, and profusion of flowers without, while within are large, high-ceiled and stuccoed rooms, elaborate windows, delicately wrought frescoes, the finest rugs and divans, showy chandeliers and candelabra, stately pier glasses brought on camels' backs from distant Trebizond or Bushire, inlaid tables from Shiraz, and portières from Reshd.

The *andaroon* presents a marked contrast. The rooms are usually small and low without ventilation, the courts confined, sunless, and bare; the garden ill-kept, and the general air of a backyard pervading the entire establishment. This order is reversed by many ecclesiastics, who in deference to the popular idea, that to be very holy, one must be very dirty, reserve all their luxuries for the *andaroon,* and make a show of beggarly plainness in the part of the house to which their pupils and the public have access.

The Persian wife seldom ventures into the *beroon,* and when she does, it is as an outsider only, who is tolerated as long as no other visitor is present. All its belongings are in charge of men-servants, and the dainty touches of the feminine hand are nowhere seen in their arrangement, and her presence is lacking there, to greet its guests, or grace its entertainments.

When the Khanum suffers from any of the ailments, for which in America or Europe outdoor

exercise, travel, a visit to the seaside, to the mountains, or to the baths is required, the physican feels his helplessness. He sees that the patient cannot recover her nervous tone in her present environment. But there is no seaside except at impossible distances and in impossible climates. A visit to the mountains would mean being shut up in a little dirty village, whose houses are mud hovels, the chief industry of whose women is the milking of goats and sheep, and working up beds of manure with bare feet, and moulding it by hand into cakes for fuel. Or, if the husband have both the means and the inclination, for her sake to make an encampment upon the mountains large enough to afford security from robbers and wandering tribes, she would be confined largely to the precincts inclosed by the canvas wall surrounding the harem. She rides only in a *kajava,* or basket, or in a closed *takhterawan,* or horse litter, or, as she sits perched high up, astride a man's saddle, looking in her balloon garments, and doubtless feeling, more insecure than Humpty Dumpty on the wall. In her outdoor costume, the Khanum never walks. At best she can only waddle, therefore she is almost as effectually shut out from this important form of exercise as the women of China. In both countries the peasant class are blessed with more freedom than those of higher rank, and the village women, dispensing with the baggy trousers and in some districts also with the *chader,* or mantle, swing by on the road with

an elastic stride that would do credit to a veteran of many campaigns.

Travelling in Persia is, for women particularly, a matter of so great discomfort, that even the shortest journey could seldom be recommended as a health measure. There are some famous mineral springs in Northern Persia, but they are usually in regions difficult of access, and often dangerous on account of nomads and robbers, and they generally have only such facilities for bathing as nature has afforded. If they really do heal diseases their virtues must be marvellous, for the sick who visit them usually stay but a day or two, though they make a business of bathing while they have the opportunity. To prescribe travel, therefore, would be about the equivalent of prescribing a journey to the moon, and to recommend outdoor exercise for an inmate of the *andaroon* would be like prescribing a daily exercise in flying, the one being about as practicable as the other. Should the physician find it necessary on the other hand to isolate his patient for the treatment of hysteria, which is exceedingly common, or for mental troubles, which are also very common, he is equally at sea. No nurse, not even a "Sairey Gamp" could be found. When it is known that one has a severe illness or visitation from God, they come, as in the days of Job, "every one from his own place—to mourn with him."

In cases where absolute isolation has been ordered, as an essential condition of the patient's

recovery, the physician may expect on his next visit to find the room filled with chattering women, who have gathered to speculate on the possibilities of a recovery or each to recommend the decoction which cured some one else, whose case was "just like this." There is but little watching done at night in the most severe cases, and a physician is seldom called up at night to see a patient.

On my first introduction to the *andaroon,* I had little acquaintance with either Persian customs or costumes. I had been asked to see the wife of a high dignitary, and on my arrival was at once ushered into her presence. I found my fair patient awaiting me, standing beside a fountain, in the midst of a garden quite Oriental in its features. She was closely veiled, but her feet and legs were bare, and her skirts were so economically abbreviated as at first to raise the question in my mind, whether I had not by mistake of the servant been announced before the lady had completed her toilet. She, however, held out her hand, which apparently she did not intend me to shake, and I presently made out that I was expected to feel her pulse as the preliminary to my inquiries concerning her symptoms; or rather in lieu of them, the competent Persian physician needing no other clue to the diagnosis. Then the pulse of the other wrist had to be examined, and I inspected the tongue, of which I obtained a glimpse between the skilfully disposed folds of the veil. This woman had been suffering from a ma-

larial disease, which had manifested some grave symptoms, and I tried to impress upon the family the importance of her taking prompt measures to avert another paroxysm. Feeling somewhat anxious as to the result, I sent the next morning to inquire about her condition and the effect of the remedy prescribed, but learned to my disgust that the medicine had not yet been given, the Mullah who must make "istekhara" (cast the lot) to ascertain whether the remedy was a suitable one for the case, not having yet arrived.

Seclusion, lack of exercise, the monotony that leaves the mind to prey upon itself, ignorance, early marriage, unhappiness, abuse, and contagious diseases bring upon the Persian woman a great amount of physical suffering directly traceable to the system of Mohammedanism. One special demand of her religion, the month of fasting, is a case in point. At the age of seven, the girls must assume this burden, not taken up by boys till they are thirteen. For a mere child to be deprived of food and drink, sometimes for seventeen hours at a stretch, day after day, and then allowed to gorge herself at night, cannot but be a physical injury.

In illness, no pen can depict the contrast between a refined Christian sickroom and the crowded noisy apartment, poisoned with tobacco smoke, where lies the poor Persian woman in the dirty garments of every-day wear, covered by bedding in worse condition.

Mentally, the Persian women are as bright as those of any race. The same physician says, "The Persian woman is often neither a doll nor a drudge. I have known some who were recipients of apparently true love, respect, and solicitude on the part of their husbands, as their sisters in Christian lands; some who were very entertaining in conversation, even in their husbands' presence; some who were their husbands' trusted counsellors; some who were noted for learning; some who were successfully managing large estates; some who have stood by me in my professional work, in emergencies demanding great strength of character and freedom from race and sectarian prejudice."

But these are the exceptions; scarcely one in a thousand has any education, even in its most restricted sense of being able to read and write her own language intelligently. It is marvellous to see how all the advantages are lavished on the boy, who will have Arabic, Persian, and French tutors, while his sister is taught nothing. In consequence, the ignorance and stupidity of woman have become proverbial. It is a common saying, "Her hair is long, but her wit is short."

In a Persian newspaper, there lately appeared some articles in which, after apologizing for mentioning the subject of women, the writer spoke strongly of their present illiterate state. He taxed the mothers with the great mortality among children, and made the amazing statement, that in Australia

every woman who loses a child is punished by law with the loss of a finger! He did not venture to prescribe this drastic remedy for Persia, but says the husbands and fathers who allow their women to remain in ignorance should be held up to public scorn and contempt, and that nothing but education and religion will make a change.

Wonderful to relate, this article elicited the following reply from a lady, which we print as it was written:

LETTER FROM A MOSLEM WOMAN

To the honored and exalted editor of the "Guide":—

"I myself have no education, but my two children, a boy and a girl, have a little. Every day they use your paper for their reading lesson, and I listen with the greatest attention. Truly, as far as a patriot's duty goes, you are discharging it. Your paper is having a remarkable effect on the minds of both men and women. I rejoice, and am delighted with your love for race and country, and praise especially the articles recommending the education of women.

"Some days ago, the children were reading, and I was listening because I take such an interest in the writings in the *Guide* that I am constrained to defer the most necessary labors, till the reading is finished. You have spoken well about the poor unfortunate women; but first the men must be educated; because the girl receives instruction from her father and

the wife from her husband. You reproach these ill-starred women, because they are addicted to superstitious practices. Your humble servant makes a petition that they are not so much to blame.

"In this very city I know men of the first rank, who have even travelled in Europe (I will not mention their names) who are superstitious to an incredible degree. Before putting on a new suit of clothes, they consult the astrologer and look in the calendar for an auspicious hour, and if shoes or other articles come from the bazaar at an unlucky moment, they return them till the stars shall be more propitious; when they contemplate a visit to royalty, or to Government officials, they take the chaplet of beads and cast lots to ascertain a fortunate time. Is it then strange that women believe in written prayers, fortune telling, and the *istekhara?* You write that in a foreign country you have seen men who had fled there to escape their wives. You are telling the truth, because, indeed, the women are a thousand times more incapable than the men. And why should they not be, who always sit behind a curtain wrapped in a veil? The husband can flee from his wife to a foreign land, but what of her who is left behind: her arms are, as it were, broken, her condition remediless, hopeless? For her, there is but one place whither she may flee—the grave! Look, and you will see in every cemetery one-fourth of all are men's graves; the rest are of women who have escaped their husbands by death.

"Again you speak of their ignorance of domestic economy, the rearing of children, the avoidance of contagious diseases, etc. When a poor woman is taken to her husband's home, it is true she knows nothing of these things, and does not make home comfortable, but by the time she is the mother of two or three children, she begins to learn; she economizes in food and clothing; she looks after her children; she adds to her husband's prosperity. She takes a pride in the home, in which she hopes to enjoy many happy days; but poor creature! she sees one day a woman entering her door, who says, 'Your husband has married me.' She recalls all her struggles for family and home, and her heart is filled with bitterness. Quarrels ensue, and her husband, taking a stick, beats her till she is like well-kneaded dough. Afterwards they both go before the judge, who without making any investigation of the case, gives sentence in favor of the man. 'You have not in any wise transgressed the law; the female tribe are all radically bad; if this one says anything more, punish her.' Unfortunate creature! If she is modest and self-respecting, this trouble falling upon her occasions various illnesses, and she knows not what becomes of house and children. The neighbor women, seeing all this, are completely discouraged from improving their homes, or rearing their children properly, as they say, 'The more our husbands' circumstances improve, the less they will care for us.' Why then reproach

the women? It is proper to advise the men, who have learned two things thoroughly from the law of the Prophet: one I have mentioned, and the other is this. In the evening when the Aga comes, he first washes himself to be ceremonially clean and says his prayers to fulfil the law of the prophet. Then he goes to his private room, or to the men's apartments. Half an hour does not pass, till he sends to demand the *ajil* (food used with intoxicating drinks, meat, fruits, etc.). The wife makes all ready, and sends to him. Then the unhappy soul hears from that quarter the sound of piano, organ, or tambourine, and some women just from their feelings at such times, become a prey to divers maladies and untold misery. At one or two o'clock in the morning, the Aga brings his honorable presence into the *andaroon*. The wife asks, 'What is this business in which you have been engaged? How long must I put up with these evil doings?' Immediately a quarrel ensues; the husband, partially or quite intoxicated, and not in his right mind, answers, 'What business of yours is it what I do? If I wish to bring the musicians and dancing women, I shall do as I like. Many women, on account of these evil practices of their husbands, give themselves up also to wicked ways, and others take to their beds with grief. Should such a one take her case to a judge, he is worse than her husband, and should she complain to the religious heads, many of them in secret indulge in the same vices.

"Why then judge so severely those who are all suffering under these troubles? Again you say that women should be educated, but fail to indicate in which quarter of our city is situated the school which they are to attend. We, in our ignorance of its location, beg you to point out where we may find it. In my own neighborhood there are twenty capable girls who are ready; some wishing to study dressmaking, some sick-nursing, midwifery, etc. Unfortunately, our nobles and ecclesiastics are so busy, advancing the price of wheat, speculating on the next harvest, snatching their neighbors' caps from their heads, that they have not yet found time to establish a school or university. I hope, through a blessing on the labors of your pen, this will all be remedied, and this stupid people awaken from its sleep. This brief petition I have made, and my daughter has written it out. As I have no learning, I beg you to excuse its mistakes and defects." . . .

This letter is remarkable as showing that an awakening is beginning in this country and that some women are feeling its influence; that among them there are stirrings of a new ambition, and a great dissatisfaction with their present condition. Moslem ladies, invited to witness the closing exhibition of a school for missionary children, exclaimed, "When will our daughters have such opportunities?" A young girl was filled with the extraordi-

nary ambition to become a doctor, like the lady physician whom she admired; she came for lessons in English, physiology, chemistry, and materia medica, showing talent and remarkable studiousness; but during a disturbance against foreign schools, her father forbade her coming, so the cloud again shrouded this particular bright star.

What is the legal and social position of woman? A girl comes into the world unwelcome; while the birth of a boy is announced and celebrated with great rejoicings, that of his sister is regarded as a misfortune. Said a mother, "Why should I not weep over my baby girl, who must endure the same sorrows I have known? She is of little value; a father of passionate temper, annoyed by the crying of the sickly infant daughter, flung her out of the window, effectually and forever stilling the pitiful wail. He was no more punished than if it had been the kitten who had suffered from his rage." If she grows up, the grace, beauty, and sweet audacity of childhood often gain for a little girl a place in her father's affections; but not to be long enjoyed; an early betrothal and marriage are the universal custom.

Engagements take place as early as three years old, and the bride is sometimes then taken to grow up with her future husband. Should one inquire as to the condition of unmarried women in this country, we are reminded of the famous chapter on "Snakes in Ireland." There are no snakes in

Ireland. I am credibly informed, that in many places it is impossible to find an unmarried girl of thirteen, and in the course of extensive travels, covering a period of more than twenty years, I have myself met but four spinsters or confirmed old maids. It is needless to add that these were persons who possessed great native strength of character and firmness of purpose, and all seemed highly respected in their own family and social circle. One, the daughter of a Mujtahid, or highest religious teacher, was thoroughly versed in all the special studies of her father, who had educated her. She understood Persian, Arabic, and Turkish, being able to read and write them well, and was often consulted on difficult points in the Koran, by the Mullahs, who admitted that she understood it better than they. Another, living in a large family of several brothers, enjoyed the esteem and affection of all, and was most sincerely mourned when she died.

These are, however, great exceptions, and considered as directly opposed to the command of the Prophet. It is regarded as a cardinal sin not to marry, and our single ladies are often assured the only prospect before them is of the eternal pains of hell-fire, as the penalty for the obstinate disobedience in this particular. Even the lepers, segregated in their wretched villages, feel the pressure of opinion and are obliged to marry in accordance with religion.

Theoretically, no girl is married against her will; but practically, the pressure from her family and

society is too strong for her to resist, and the same is much the case with the young men. The choice of a partner for life being one in which often the boy has no voice, it follows that the girl has none whatever. A father engaging his daughter was asked, "What does the girl think of it herself?" "She? It is none of her affair; it is my business whom she marries." Like Browning's Pompilia:

> "Who, all the while, bore from first to last
> As brisk a part in the bargain, as yon lamb
> Brought forth from basket, and set out for sale
> Bears, while they chaffer o'er it; each in turn
> Patting the curly, calm, unconscious head,
> With the shambles ready round the corner there."

Thus the girl enters a new home, often to be the slave of her mother-in-law. As a rule, the married couple have had no previous acquaintance with each other.

Such a state of society is hard on both sexes. A man is bound to a wife who will in all probability deceive and disobey him, who compasses by fraud what she cannot obtain by fair means, and who has no affection for him. She is ignorant; she is no companion for him mentally; it is not strange that he dreads to place in her keeping his honor, his property, and the welfare of his house. I have heard a young man say, "We are like putting out a hand into the dark, to receive we know not what. Of one thing only we are sure; it will be bad." It is impossible that much unhappiness should not re-

sult, as shown by the number of divorces, reckoned by one of themselves as at least forty per cent. of the marriages. The wonder is that happy marriages do occur. Some there undoubtedly are, but in defiance of the system, and not in consequence of it. When one such comes to our notice, it appears like a green and refreshing oasis in a monotonous desert. One lady told us, "I have been married fifteen years, and my husband and I have have never had a difference." Another said, "He is so kind to me; he has never yet scolded me for anything I did." She added, "But I am extremely careful to avoid what I know he does not like and in all matters I try my best to please him." It must be said, however, that one of these men is secretly a believer in Christ, and the other a follower of the Bab, in whose system the equality and rights of woman play a prominent part.

Did space permit we should gladly tell the romantic history of Qurrat-el-Ayn, the Joan of Arc of the Babi movement; but in this connection, we may be pardoned for giving the following sonnet, evoked by her remarkable life and tragic death:

"Quarrat-el-Ayn! not famous far beyond
Her native shore. Not many bards have sung
Her praises, who, her enemies among,
Wielding her beauty as a magic wand,
Strove for the cause of him who had proclaimed
For poor down-trodden womanhood the right
Of freedom. Lifting high her beacon light

Of truth, she went unveiled and unashamed,
A woman, in the land where women live
And weep and die secluded and unknown,
She broke the bonds of custom, and to give
The Bab her aid, she dared the world alone,
Only to fail: death closed the unequal strife,
And Persia blindly wrecked a noble life." . . .

The popular estimate of woman is that she is naturally inferior, not to be trusted, to be kept continually under surveillance as a necessary evil, with something disgraceful in the fact of her existence, a person to be controlled and kept down from birth to death. "Why do you take your wife out to walk with you?" said one brother to another more enlightened. "I see you promenading outside of the village with her; she will get out of her proper place, and neither obey or respect you, if you pamper her in that way." The younger man replied with indignation, "Is she not a human being, and shall I not treat her as such?" The elder answered, "She must know that her proper position is under your foot."

A poet says, "A thousand houses are destroyed by women." Another Moslem authority writes, "Jealousy and acrimony, as well as weakness of character and judgment, are implanted in the nature of women, and incite them to misconduct and vice." Mohammed says, "Chide those whose refractoriness you have cause to fear, and beat them." The limit suggested is, "Not one of you must whip his wife like whipping a slave."

A book containing sage advice warns man against three things: "First, excess of affection for a wife, for this gives her prominence and leads to a state of perversion, when the power is overpowered and the commander commanded. Second, consulting or acquainting a wife with secrets or amount of property." Mohammed also warns, "Not to entrust to the incapable the substance which God hath placed with you," and, "Beware, make not large settlements on women." "Third, Let him allow her no musical instruments, no visiting out of doors, or listening to stories."

As to a woman's duty, Mohammed declared that if the worship of one created being could be permitted to another, he would have enjoined the worship of husbands. It seems strange to calculate a woman's value arithmetically, but in Moslem law the testimony of two women is equal to that of one man, a daughter gets half a son's inheritance, and a wife only an eighth of her husband's property, if there are children; otherwise a fourth. A husband does not speak of his wife as such, but uses some circumlocution as "My house, my child, or the mother of such a boy." A villager asked the doctor to come and treat his mother. "How old is she?" "Thirty." "And how old are you?" "Forty." "How can she be your mother?" A bystander, filled with contempt for such obtuseness, whispered, "It is his wife, but he doesn't like to say so." In like manner, the children are not taught to say father

and mother, but the master, the older brother, the mistress, the lady sister, the older sister.

A comic paper published by Mohammedans in Russia, and in their own language, has recently had some amusing pictures bearing on the position of women. In the first, two women and several men are coming before the Mullahs for marriage or divorce; large heads of sugar carried into the presence hint at bribery as a factor in the case. The women, who stand mute and submissive, with their mouths tied up, as is literally the case with many of them, have evidently nothing to say in the matter. The second scene shows a man and three boys sitting around a large bowl of rice, which is rapidly disappearing before their vigorous onset. The cat is crunching a bone, but the wife and mother sits at one side while even the baby in her arms is given a portion; but she waits till all are satisfied, and she may come in for the leavings. Again, the lord and master of the house, stretched upon a divan, smokes his pipe, a crying child beside him on the floor. His wife enters, staggering under a heavy stone water jar on her shoulder, another in her hand, and a child tied on her back. He exclaims, "Oh, woman, may God curse you! this child gives me the headache! come, take it also on your back."

A full two-page colored cartoon depicts the carriage of a most exalted personage, with the veiled wife in it rolling through the street, while all men and boys are turning their backs, and some even

shutting their eyes in obedience to officers armed with long whips. A dog also has duteously and humbly turned his back to the forbidden sight, and is crouched down with the most virtuous air you could imagine. When such satires as this can appear, and the edition of the paper runs up into the thousands, people are beginning to think.

XVIII

DARKNESS AND DAYBREAK IN PERSIA

PART II

THERE is indeed another side to the question, and all honor to the Moslem men whose eyes are open to see the wrongs of women, whose hearts pity, and who venture into the thorny and dangerous path of reform! Many more, no doubt, feel all these things, but what can they do? They are so bound in the net of custom and prejudice, that it is next to impossible to remedy, in any degree, the existing evils; while by attempting it, they run the risk of making things worse, and so shrug their shoulders, and feel there is nothing to do but to submit.

One husband, sincerely attached to his wife, said to me, "How glad I should be to see her free as you are! It is no pleasure to me to have her shrouded in a black wrap, and shut up behind a curtain; it is the dream of my life to take her to Europe, and have her travel with me, as a companion and a friend. But in this country I dare not deviate in the least from our customs; she is so pretty, if other men saw her I should be killed for her sake." This man was studying English, and the teacher being a

MAT-MAKERS (PERSIA)

INDOOR DRESS (NORTHERN PERSIA)

man, the lady sat behind a screen, listening to the lessons, and learning faster than the gentleman. Though he had three other wives, this one (though being childless) had complete possession of his heart. They gave a supper to our lady physician and myself, he doing us the honor to wait on the table, a thing which, had not my own eyes seen it, I could not have believed possible in Persia. It was sufficiently surprising to have him sit at the same table and eat with us, but how much more so, that with each course he should rise, change our plate, and serve the food which the cook brought to the door of the room. He had never appeared so honorable in our eyes, as when, thus laying aside the pride of rank and station, he was "among us as one that served."

When one first comes to a Moslem country, a sentiment of profound pity for the women predominates, but as it is evident that half the population cannot be kept in an unnatural and degraded condition, without entailing disastrous consequences on the other half, one begins to feel equal sympathy for the men, who suffer under the disadvantage of having no true family life, and indeed of being unable to form a conception of what it is.

The great trouble is the lack of confidence in married life; as it is a very rare thing to find a wife who can trust her husband not to divorce her, if it appear convenient and desirable, or not to add to his wives if he be able.

Divorce, which a woman may obtain under cer-

tain rare conditions, is a man's right without restriction. A woman's only protection is, her dowry must be paid her, and her husband must pronounce the sentence of divorce three times. Thus a little check is put on an angry impulse. Age, poor health, loss of beauty or eyesight, lack of children, especially of sons, or the merest whim, may be the excuse for it. The most pathetic appeals are made to the lady doctor, by women in dread of divorce.

A wealthy nobleman, married to a young and beautiful lady of equal rank, the mother of both sons and daughters, and as reported, with a fair amount of wedded happiness, was dazzled by a proposed alliance with a princess of such rank as to brook no rival. The indispensable condition was a divorce, and absolute separation from the wife he had. She knew nothing of her fate till one day, when visiting at her brother's, word was brought her she need not return home. That night the wedding was celebrated with firing of cannon and great festivities, but the children were crying for their mother, and for her and them there was no redress. She immediately went on pilgrimage to a holy shrine, to pray that her husband and his new wife might be cursed of God. The man met with some very signal and public reverses, and transported with joy, she flew to another sacred place, to call down more misfortunes on his head.

Many of the divorced women remarry; others become beggars or maid-servants. As for the chil-

dren, if the family be wealthy, they remain with the father; if poor, in case both parents find other partners, they are often cast adrift to shift for themselves.

On a journey, the wife of the muleteer was seen to be laying aside part of the tea, sugar, etc., purchased by the man for their joint use, and was asked the cause. She replied, "It is necessary to make some provision for myself against the day when he shall divorce me; I have had six husbands and he has had seven wives; what can I expect?" The couple had been newly married, and this was their wedding trip.

A sad-faced drudge in our lodging place told us, "I am the twenty-fifth wife, some are divorced, some dead; to-morrow it may be my turn to go."

Polygamy is prevalent among the rich who can afford it, and is regarded by many as highly meritorious. Some of the poor also practise it, but most of them have but one wife at a time, and are comparatively faithful to her. The percentage of men who live in polygamy is difficult to arrive at, but a good judge has estimated it at thirty per cent. The best men seem to be ashamed and to deprecate it. Some say it is forbidden in the Koran, by the verse which allows only as many wives as a man can treat with equity; as they say this is an impossibility, if a man has more than one consort, to treat them alike. When asked about the example of the Prophet, and the holy men, especially the Imams,

they say, as for Mohammed, he was allowed peculiar privileges, not granted to other men. Some who consider the Imams sinless, explain their conduct in the same way. Those who do not accept this solution say the Imams did wrong in having a plurality of wives. When asked about the Shah, they reply he does wrong in practising polygamy, but it is permitted to him because he has the power in his hands.

No Moslem woman is supposed to have any right to require or expect that her husband will be true to her in the marriage relation, though fidelity to him is rigorously exacted of her, and her breach of it is punishable with death.

There may be instances where the women of a polygamous household agree; the casual stranger, who visits a harem without any knowledge of the language, or personal acquaintance with the inmates, will often be assured that they love each other fondly, and are more than sisters in friendship; but the trusted family friend, or the lady doctor, can tell a very different tale.

Our doctor told me once, she thought the two women of a certain house, were an exception to the general rule, and that they really were friends; but soon after, the older one being sick, she saw a good deal of her in private, and was obliged sadly to confess she had been mistaken.

I have myself known of one case, in which the rival wives were of the same mind. One of our neighbors had two partners of his joys and sorrows,

who sometimes joined forces, and gave him a good beating, so he would be seen flying in hot haste from his "happy" home. One man said to one of us, "I don't need to die in order to go to hell; I have it in my own house; I live there." Another, when told by the indignant doctor, "Your mode of life is beastly," replied, "I know it; compared with me the beasts are decent."

If the wives are in the same house, it is filled with bitterness and jealousy; if they are in separate houses or even in different towns, the case is not much better. If the women were not taught by their religious leaders that their sufferings are the will of God, and that it is very meritorious to accept them, and if they believed any other fate possible, I do not think they would endure it. They say "Christian women have their heaven now, but afterwards they will inherit endless suffering; we have hell in this life, but hereafter shall come eternal bliss."

"Do we love our husbands?" said one in answer to a question, "Yes, as much as a sieve holds water." One of our friends, the third of three wives in one house, was found by us at her mother's. "Oh, yes," she said, "I have come home to stay; I simply could not bear it any longer; so I hired a woman to take my place with my husband and came here."

These are regularly married wives, with dowry rights and the protection of law. What of the poor temporary hired ones, who come for a longer or shorter period, and a specified wage? This is the

peculiar shame and blot of the Shiah sect of Islam, which not only tolerates the vile institution of *muti,* but takes it under the sanction of law and custom, and even permits the ministers of religion to be the chief promoters of it, many of them accumulating wealth by this base means.

You will sometimes hear it stated that there are no houses of prostitution in Moslem lands. In Persia, at least, the institution may not exist in precisely the same form as in other countries, where it is under the ban of the law, and in defiance of public opinion, but it is here, in a form which utterly depraves the mind of the people, and obliterates for them all moral distinctions, poisoning family life at the very fountain. It is impossible to go fully into this subject: the details are too revolting, but one or two instances may suffice.

We know of a girl who was sold for five dollars by her family, and taken by her brother to a city where a Khan wished for her during his temporary sojourn; on his return he discarded her, and she came back to her family, her social standing in no wise affected by the transaction, which was merely a matter of business. An old roué, who had already had over thirty wives, sitting like a spider in his web, from his upper window spied a pretty young girl in the street. Her family was poor, and he tempted them with money and large promises, and sent silks and satins for the trousseau. It was all but done, when some missionary ladies remonstrated

on her behalf, and showed how she would soon come back to them ruined and diseased. So she escaped for that time.

In the house of my Turkish teacher, I was introduced to "my brother's wife." Inquiring about her some months after I was told, "My brother has no wife; he has never been married." "But who, then, was that woman who was presented to me as his wife?" "That was a *muti* woman; he treated her so badly she could not stay her time out, but asked to be excused and went away without her money."

The effect of polygamy and divorce on children is very bad. A son, particularly, seeing his mother treated with disrespect, feels contempt for her, and will in many cases tyrannize over and beat her. Another effect is that curiosity is stimulated, and a premature and unhallowed knowledge is gained of the most sacred relations of life, which is contaminating, and destroys for ever the innocence of childhood. As a matter of course, there is jealousy between the children of different wives, and estrangement and hatred destroy family affection. One who has seen the children of Sarah in the place of honor, presented proudly to the visitor and indulged in every wish, and at the same time the children of Hagar standing humbly in the presence as servants, or hanging about the door outside, will not soon forget the contrast.

In such a house there is nothing whatever to teach a boy the possibility of leading a clean life;

purity is not expected of him, and often the most elaborate provision is made to satisfy the lusts of the flesh. The mother of a young boy will hire a female servant for him as part of the regular family. The effect of such an element on the whole household may be imagined. Bitter also is the retribution often suffered for such breaches of the law of God. Barrenness is a most common thing, and the Moslem population does not increase but barely replaces itself, while the Jews and Christians, whose family life is comparatively pure, survive and win in the race of life.

If a Moslem woman were sure of her place in her husband's affection and her position in the home, I am certain she would prove herself as worthy as any; for I have observed some families among them where the tradition or custom of the clan is against polygamy and divorce, and the women in those homes are loyal to their husbands' interests, ready to work hard and deny themselves for the home which they know is guaranteed to them and their children. We are very apt to think that having known nothing better and having nothing else to hope for, they must be contented and reconciled to their lot. This reminds one of the answer of the old fishwife, when one remonstrated with her on the habit of skinning eels alive, "Oh, they don't mind it; they are used to it." This is far from being the case, and it is especially true of those who, by travel or contact with Christians, have had their eyes opened to the

fact, that in other countries their sisters enjoy advantages of education, and are objects of respect denied to themselves; that Christian women are trusted with freedom, and as a rule prove worthy of it.

Yet the fact remains: these women and girls cannot be educated and emancipated, without bringing to bear on the social fabric influences which would result in its disintegration and destruction, with nothing better to replace it. Galling as are the curtain and the veil, they cannot be dispensed with, for fear of worse evils. Ignorance and seclusion are better than education and liberty without moral restraint.

While polygamy and divorce exist, and there is no standard of purity equally applicable to both sexes, more freedom than woman now possesses cannot with safety be granted her. I fail to see any remedy, but in the doctrine and practice of Christianity. The fact known to be true of a school in Syria, points out the solution of the problem. Of the pupils of a Protestant school, conducted there, for many years, and largely attended by Moslem girls, it is stated a case has never been known where a pupil who had passed through their hands had been divorced or obliged to accept a second wife in her home.

These women have learned lessons of duty, of personal responsibility to God, of self-respect, self-control, kindness, and love, that cause the hearts of

their husbands safely to trust in them. Can we say as much for any other system of education or religion?

Certainly Mohammedanism, with its twin evils of polygamy and divorce, has not only failed to elevate woman, but has everywhere resulted in her degradation. More pitiful than the more obvious wrongs inflicted by this system, is the effect produced upon character. Being distrusted, she has become untrustworthy; being abused, she has become abusive; and every evil passion is given free rein.

The bad wife is described by a Moslem writer as "a rebel for contumacy and unruliness; as a foe for contemptuousness and reproach; and as a thief for treacherous designs upon her husband's purse." She becomes an adept in the use of woman's weapon, the tongue; "an unruly evil full of deadly poison." "An angry woman in a passion of rage, pouring forth torrents of curses and invectives, is a fury incarnate." The jealousy of rival wives often leads to dreadful crimes. One woman became blind from vitriol thrown in her face by another wife; an only son, most precious and of high rank, was poisoned in his innocent babyhood by his mother's rival; a young bride attempted suicide in her despair.

These are but instances; every harem has its unwritten tragedies.

Not the least feature of the moral ruin into which they have fallen, is the impurity which seems to permeate every thought; so that they delight in

obscene songs, vile allusions, and impure narratives. A missionary lady visiting at the home of a high-born Moslem woman, very religious and devout according to their standards, was so shocked by the character of the conversation with which her hostess was trying to entertain her, as to be forced to say, "If you talk to me like this, I shall be obliged to excuse myself and leave your house."

Saddest of all, they often become so depraved that they not only connive at the evils of the system, but actively promote them. A lady going on a long pilgrimage herself chose and brought two young girls, to be her husband's concubines in her absence. A mother cultivates in her son the passions she should teach him to subdue. The present mode of life is supposed to be perpetuated in Paradise, where every true believer is to have "seventy-two wives, and eighty thousand slaves," all Houris specially created for him. The place for Moslem woman is not definitely specified.

The religion that robs them of happiness in this life, and gives no hope of it in the next, lays the same obligations upon them as on men, viz., the five foundations of practice: the witnessing to the Unity of God and the apostleship of the Prophet; observing the five daily seasons of prayer; alms-giving; the fast of Ramazan; and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

In Persia is added the mourning for a month, for Hassan and Hossein, the martyred grandsons of Mohammed. As in all religions, women are most

zealous and devoted in the performance of these duties, but the practice of Islam has nothing to satisfy their soul hunger. Their belief in God is cruel fatalism, and all their rites work no change of heart, and give no peace of conscience.

The Gospel comes to them with a special appeal, and bringing its own message. That they should have any message, or be considered at all, is news to them; they are so used to neglect and disrespect. When two of us, at the invitation of a lady of rank, attended their Passion Play, we sat with her on the ground, among a crowd of women, who were pushed about by ushers with long poles, while the "lords of creation" sat comfortably above on chairs, and in booths.

So accustomed are Moslem women to being hustled about that they wonder at Christ's "Forbid them not," which we are apt to apply only to the children, forgetting that it was spoken for the mothers. It is sometimes most amusing to see a pompous dignitary crowd his way into the dispensary of the lady physician, and when made with difficulty to understand that only women are treated there, retire crestfallen. There at least women have not only the first, but the only entrance. They are not surprised at the Syrophenician woman being called "a dog." They are used to the epithet and employ it themselves. One often hears one berating her own offspring, as "child of a dog." When driven to desperation by want, the Persian woman

can be as defiant, shameless, and persistent, as she of old before the unjust judge. Not unfrequently mobs of women led by a woman, attack the gates of the governors, demanding bread.

Their often miserable and diseased condition of health makes them feel how tender is Christ's compassion in His miracles of healing. They also have often suffered much from quack nostrums, "only to grow worse." In any crowd of village women, one may see an old hag, bent and "bowed together—not able to lift herself up," and there is no more pitiful sight than the old women of Persia. A neighbor, a hundred years old, always appeals to our charity on the ground of being "an orphan."

Their life and occupations are so identical with those of Bible times, that they feel at once familiar with the scenes described in the New Testament. Every morning, a village woman must mix the leaven in her meal for the daily baking, must sweep her mud floor, and often two of them sit at the hand mill grinding wheat or salt. Every one who can, wears a necklace of silver coins, and counts each one precious. The custom of covering the face "lest a man look upon a woman" is so inwrought into their earliest training that they are able to draw their veils *instantly,* whatever they are doing, if a man approaches.

They marvel, as did Christ's disciples, that He talked with a woman, especially of a foreign race, and that He asked for a drink of water, for to-day

the Persians think a cup defiled if a Christian drink from it. In a wedding procession in a village, the musicians lead with fife and drum, and "the virgins" follow in all the finery they can muster. At times of mourning also, they act just as the Gospels describe. Friends gather to "weep and bewail." I have seen a roomful of women swaying and sobbing, while a mother chanted a plaintive refrain: "Alas! alas!" repeating the beloved name of the dead; often tearing her hair, and beating her breast. I have often seen blear-eyed women, who said they had become so by excessive weeping over the death of a child. To such comes Jesus' message, "Weep not."

Religious observances in Persia are such as give special significance to Gospel teaching. I had a visitor whose lips were continually mumbling while she fingered her beads. She told me she was making merit, by repeating the hundred names of Allah. Often when in their homes, our hostess will excuse herself, because "it is the hour of prayer," and going to a corner of the same room, will go through the forms and gestures of Mohammedan worship. "Vain repetitions" they seem, when we know the words are Arabic, a language she does not understand; and as in the midst of her prayers she calls out directions to her servants, one can see there is no devotion in them.

Fasting is a terrible burden, when, for a month, from dawn to dark, not a morsel of food, or drop of water, or a whiff of the loved cigarette or pipe can

pass their lips. The people acknowledge that it is the cause of quarrelling and reviling, so irritable do they become under the strain, yet they dare not "break their fast" for fear of others.

All who can afford it make the long pilgrimage to Mecca, or in lieu of that to Kerbela or Meshed; and bear thereafter the holy name of Haji, Kerbelai, or Meshedi. To them it is a new thought, given by Christ to the woman of Sychar, that no special location is "the place where men ought to worship." Of all His words none receive more approval from the Persian woman than His teachings on marriage and divorce. They often say to us, "How happy you Christian women are with no fear of divorce!"

Not only Christ's teachings but His character makes an impression, and His gentleness and purity especially attract them. We are shocked at the coarse questions: "Can God have a Son? Was Jesus married?" but as they hear the story of His marvellous life a look of awe sometimes comes into their faces, as the vision of "the White Christ" dawns upon them.

A Moslem lady said to me, "I cannot read, but one woman in our harem can, and she reads the Injil (New Testament) to us; we can never get enough of it." Another, making a call of condolence upon me, said, "There is only one book that can comfort you; you have told me about it; now I tell you."

Those who have grown up in the midst of free in-

stitutions, under the protection of law, and in the light of publicity, can really have no idea of the difficulties to be encountered by the Moslem woman who becomes a Christian. A man can escape by flight, but this refuge is denied her. Even if she wish to keep her change of faith secret, it is impossible to do so, and be true to her new-found Saviour. The whole warp and woof of her daily life are so bound up with religious observances, and the least failure to perform them is so jealously noted, the least endeavor to fulfil the commands of the Gospel with regard to Sabbath rest, reading the Word, or secret prayer is at once the object of remark and criticism; often of active opposition. Were it not so her changed life and character mark her out as walking in a different path and measuring her conduct by another standard from those who surround her. She is most happy if, as sometimes happens, her husband, brother, father, or son is in sympathy with her, and has perhaps been the means of her enlightenment; or if a sister or friend is of like faith, and they can strengthen each other. But often she stands entirely alone in her family and social circle, and must bear much petty persecution, even if she is not turned out of her home, does not lose her children, or her life. In such circumstances, if a convert stand firm, and even win her enemies to accept Jesus, it is a genuine miracle. Yet it is seen to occur.

Words cannot tell the beauty of some of these

transformed faces: the sweetness plucked from bitterness, the "lily among thorns." The present help of a living Saviour and the wonderful hopes for the future have made life an entirely different thing. One such who had borne a heavy yoke in her youth, had suffered deeply, and with rancor and rebellion in her heart against him who had blighted her life, has learned to forgive and pray for the one who so deeply injured her; and her daily household life is a triumph of grace. During a cholera epidemic, when all around were panic-stricken, she and her sisters, who have found the like precious refuge, were perfectly calm, saying, "Why should we fear death? It can only take us to Jesus, which is far better; as living or dying we are His."

One old woman walked three miles and back once a week in order to be instructed in the Gospel, and is never satisfied, always wants to learn more, and takes great pains to remember texts and prayers. Once after the others had gone she caught hold of me, saying, "Do you think I walk all these miles, with my blind eyes, to learn nothing? Come and teach me some more." Showing some hard barley bread, she said, "No one shall say I come for food; I have brought my own bread."

Another woman, whose paralytic son had learned to read the Bible, said, "At first I did not care for it, but little by little I got to love it." It worked a transformation in that humble home; the son in his first despair had attempted to poison himself; but he

learned to praise God for the affliction which was the means of acquainting him with his Saviour. The mother instead of considering the helpless young man a burden, and complaining of the misfortune, nursed him for years with such rare patience and tenderness, that we marvelled to see it. The contrast between her and her neighbors is marked; her face is gentle and kind, her voice sweet. She is faithful, industrious, and honest; for a whole summer when a family was absent, she went alone every week to sweep the house, and not a thing was ever missed, though, in general, we expect nothing better than pilfering and theft from the women of the country.

In one city is gathered a little band of believing women, who hold a weekly prayer meeting, and "it is most touching to hear their simple requests and pleading for this and that one still outside the fold. When I was going to B—— they gave me a message for the sisters there. They had long taken a special interest in the work in that place, and never failed to remember it at the throne of grace. They had heard several women there were secret believers, but afraid to confess their faith openly, so they sent word to them that they themselves were once in the same state. They feared to confess Christ before men, but He had promised to be with them, and He had given them grace to come out boldly, and He had kept His promise to give peace and joy in all times of trial and difficulty. They then begged their

sisters to do as they had done, to take the plunge, trusting in His power to help them, and they would find all their fears taken away and courage given instead."

Such, living and dying, was the experience of Almass of Urumia. She had become a Christian, and her husband also had suffered great persecution from her own family on this account. Her husband being away, she was living in her father's house, and her stepmother would not even give her enough to eat, constantly reviled her, made her life bitter, and did her best to prevent her praying. Being stricken with consumption, she went to the hospital, where she rejoiced in Christian companionship and instruction, but at the last, she was taken to her own home to die. A young Nestorian doctor, called in to attend her, witnessed her triumphant death; himself but a nominal Christian, he exclaimed, "Would that I could die so happy!" Her whole trust was in Jesus, and her only anxiety that her little daughter should be trained in the same faith.

Almass means diamond, and in the day when the Lord "makes up His jewels" she will surely be among them.

Far away in the isles of Bahrein,
  Down under the depths of the sea,
The Persian diver gathers his shells
  For the goodly pearls that shall be.

And what is the price of a goodly pearl?
  A merchant man once for one,

'Tis said, sold all he ever possessed,
And counted the deed well done.

And what is the price of a human soul?
The price it is set so high
The Son of God gave all that He had
When He came on earth to buy.

Submerged in the sea of sin are the souls,
Are the souls of Persian girls;
Ah! who will dive to the lowest depths,
To gather these hidden pearls?

They are gems for the crown of the King of kings,
More precious far in His sight
Than the jewels rare of the Shah-în-Shah,—
All His glory and delight.

XIX

THE CONDITION OF MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN IN BALUCHISTAN

In the degraded position of its women is to be seen the worst fruit of the religion of Islam. I will quote from the Government Report of British Baluchistan: "Throughout the Province, but especially among the Afghans and Brahuis, the position of woman is one of extreme degradation; she is not only a mere household drudge, but she is the slave of man in all his needs, and her life is one of continual and abject toil. No sooner is a girl fit for work than her parents send her to tend cattle and she is compelled to take her part in all the ordinary household duties. Owing to the system of *walwar* in vogue among the Afghans, a girl, as soon as she reaches nubile age, is, for all practical purposes, put up for auction sale to the highest bidder. The father discourses on her merits, as a beauty or as a housekeeper, in the public meeting places, and invites offers from those who are in want of a wife. Even the more wealthy and more respectable Afghans are not above this system of thus lauding the human wares which they have for sale. The betrothal of girls who are not yet born is frequent, and

a promise of a girl thus made is considered particularly binding.

"It is also usual for an award of compensation for blood to be ordered to be paid in this shape of girls, some of whom are living, while others are not yet born.

"Similar customs prevail among the Jhalawan Brahuis, but they have not yet extended to all the Balneh tribes, though there are signs that the poorer classes are inclined to adopt them. The exchange of girls, however, among the Baluchis and the framing of conditions, regarding any offspring which may result from the marriage, indicate that among this race also, women are regarded in much the same light.

"These details may appear to be beside the mark in discussing the classification of women as dependents or actual workers, but I relate them with the object of showing that woman in Baluchistan is regarded as little more than a chattel. For where such a state of parental feeling or rather want of feeling is to be found, is it surprising to find that woman is considered either as a means for increasing man's comforts, in the greater ease with which they are procured by her toil, or an object for the gratification of his animal passions?

"A wife in Baluchistan must not only carry water, prepare food, and attend to all ordinary household duties, but she must take the flocks out to graze, groom her husband's horse, and assist in the cultiva-

tion. So far is this principle carried out among the Jajars of Zhob, that it is considered incumbent on a married woman of this tribe to provide means by her own labor for clothing herself, her husband, and her children, and she receives no assistance, monetary or otherwise, for this purpose from her husband, but in addition to all this, the husband hopes that she may become the mother of girls who will fetch as high a price as their mother did before them. Hence it happens that among Afghans, polygamy is only limited by the purchasing power of a man; and a wife is looked on as a better investment than cattle, for in a country where drought and scarcity are continually present, the risk of loss of animals is great, whilst the offspring of a woman, if a girl, will assuredly fetch a high price." So far the census report.

Slavery, polygamy, and concubinage exist throughout the Kelat state and Baluchi area. Slavery is of a domestic character, but the slave is often in a degraded and ignorant condition, and in times of scarcity almost starved by his owner.

The female slaves often lead the lives of common prostitutes, especially among the Baluch tribes, where the state of the women generally seems very degraded.

Regarding polygamy, the average man is unable to afford more than one wife, but the higher classes often possess from thirty to sixty women, many of them from the Hazare tribes of Afghanistan, whose

women and children, during the rebellion in the late Amir's reign, were sold over into Baluchistan and Afghanistan. In nearly every village of any size one sees the Hazare women, and the chief will talk of buying them as a farmer at home will speak of purchasing cattle.

Worse than all, one has daily illustrations of the truth that the sins of the fathers are visited on their families, in the degraded victims of inherited and acquired disease who come to the missionary doctor for relief, healing being impossible in many of the cases of these poor women. Pure selfishness characterizes the men in their relationship with their wives. All must not and cannot be told in illustration of this, but what happened a short time ago in our out-patient department of the Zenana Mission Hospital is an instance.

A young Brahui mother was brought in order to be relieved from suffering by an operation which would require her to remain in the hospital a fortnight. When this was proposed, the woman who brought her said at once, "If she does that her husband will send her away." The poor girl had to depart untreated, because the husband feared his bodily comforts might be less if she were not there to minister to them.

May those who see this dark picture of the effect of Islam on womanhood in the East, do all that is in them to bring the glorious light of the Gospel of Christ to their suffering sisters.

XX

IN SOUTHERN INDIA

In South India the Mohammedans have been more or less influenced by the Christian and heathen communities by which they are surrounded. Many of them, especially those belonging to the trading communities, have married women of Hindoo birth who have become nominal Mohammedans.

Amongst the higher classes, especially amongst the rich and well-to-do, polygamy is still common, though there are many men who have only one wife and few who have more than two. As a rule, in the city of Madras, each wife will have a small place of her own. It is a rare thing for several wives to live in the same house. It is, however, extremely difficult to find out, without undue questioning, who the various inmates are. Often a house will be quite full of women and children of all ages, but as a rule the true explanation will be that the head of the house has many sons, each of whom has brought his wife to live in his old home, and all live in strict outward obedience to the mother-in-law. How much depends upon this mother-in-law! When she is a kindly, peaceable woman, things go fairly

smoothly, but terrible things happen in homes where the mother-in-law is harsh and severe.

In all the homes the purdah is strictly kept, and alas! who can tell what dark deeds are *occasionally* done in these secluded homes. Still education is spreading rapidly, and with it changes must and do come. Young educated Mohammedans are now wanting educated wives. The principal Mohammedans in Madras come very much in contact with Europeans and are considerably influenced by them, and we do not see the Moslem as he appears in Moslem countries under Moslem rule, but as he appears after living for generations under the British flag. If he disagrees with public opinion (which no doubt he often does) he keeps his opinion very much to himself, and with graceful courtesy agrees to differ.

The purdah system is one that brings with it terrible evils, and yet it is a system to which those who apparently suffer from it most, cling the most closely. The secluded women themselves look upon it as an honor, and a proof of the value set upon them. Even the very poorest people seclude their wives; while soldiers on the march hang up blankets, sheets, and even rags to form a little enclosure for their wives at each halting place. Though individual women will often speak of their many troubles they rarely mention their isolation, and truly pity those of other nations who are not taken equal care of. With education this aspect of affairs

will change, and girls who have been educated in mission schools view things in a very different light and no doubt long for greater freedom.

The best and only method of helping these poor secluded women is to spread amongst them the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else can really help them, and the great means of doing so is by education. Educating them to read so that they can read of Him in their seclusion, and educating them as thoroughly as possible in schools and house-to-house visitation so that they can understand what they read.

Let me give one illustration of what can be done in this way. Some years ago I was called in to a small zenana, where the family were of noble birth but extremely poor; so proud that they would all rather starve than take money or tell of their troubles. Three little girls read with me, and very bright and intelligent I found them. The mother was in bad health and seemed sad, though her husband was always very kind to her. The girls read regularly and got very fond of their lessons and wished they could live like English girls. One day I was told that the elder girl was to be married the next week. She was in great distress, for she knew nothing of the man who had been chosen for her and feared naturally that he might be uneducated and ignorant. I was unable to go to the wedding, and to my great distress the young bride was taken away to a distant town without my seeing her again. Some

months passed and then I got a letter from a stranger. It was well written and well expressed in English and I found to my great delight that it was from the husband of my old pupil. He said he felt he must write to thank me for having educated his wife to be a friend and companion for him. He had heard from a friend that some girls of his own class were being educated in Madras and he had asked for one in marriage. His dread for years had been to be bound to an ignorant woman and now his fears were dispersed; his wife was a great pleasure to him and her judgment of great use. He added, "I can only think that her progress has been due to her study of the Bible, and I want you to send me a copy that we may study together." He is dead now and the girl widow is in great distress. She says: "I have been in the light and am now back in the dark." This shows what can be done by education to raise a people so degraded as many Mohammedans are.

The part of South India where the Mohammedans are most independent is the "Nizam's Dominion," which is under the control of the Nizam of Hyderabad (subject, of course, to England). Hyderabad is a large walled city, crowded with rather fierce-looking Mohammedans, and it is only of late years that English people have been allowed within the walls without an escort. Even at the present day no English live inside the walls. Everything inside is purely Mohammedan, and the Eng-

lish live at Secunderabad, where the English troops are stationed, just a few miles off.

In Hyderabad, were it not for H. H. the Nizam, many of the Nawabs would be glad to bring their wives out. Quite a number of the leading nobles have but one wife and glory in the fact. The Crown Prince (Sahibzada) has been married lately to a lady of noble family. This was probably the first Nizam to get married. The Nizam, from the fear of intrigue, fills his harem with low-class women. Some of the nobles bring their wives out of purdah as soon as they leave the state on a holiday.

Polygamy is still common, especially among the well-to-do. A ready purchase of slaves, during the great famine of 1900, as concubines, proves that this evil still exists. Few men have "many" wives, however.

The effect on home life of this system is evident. The Sahibzada (the next Nizam) when a boy was taken from the palace, his home, to escape the evils and temptations of a royal zenana. He lived in a large house with only his tutor and guardians till his marriage. A thoughtful munshi who was anxious about his children's morals, deplored a system that made the mother so ignorant of the outside world and so unable to direct a young son aright.

Let me give you a few of my experiences with regard to Mussulman women, especially during my stay in Hyderabad. One zenana we used to visit belonged to an old man who professed to be a great

reformer, but whose women were still in strict purdah. He several times told us that he would be delighted if we could persuade his wife and daughters to go out with us, but of course they would not hear of such a thing. To their minds it is only the very poor and degraded who wander about unveiled or even drive in an open carriage, and would not all the ladies of their acquaintance be horrified at the bare idea of their leaving their old habits. So that all our arguments and persuasion were useless, and the husband went on writing his papers on the need of reform in the treatment of their women. With this lady and her daughters we one day went to a fair for women only. We had to submit to having our carriage covered with a very large sheet so that no eye could see through the closed venetians, and when, after great difficulty, the lady had been placed in the carriage we drove to the enclosure where the fair was to be held. Right into the enclosure drove the carriage, and then the ladies, carefully shrouded in sheets, were conducted through a narrow gateway into a second enclosure, and there were thousands of women and children. Not a man was to be seen anywhere. It was so strange to see them wandering about freely in their bright-colored garments and to remember the streets of the great city they had come from, where hardly a woman is ever seen. These women never crossed the threshold of their houses before perhaps, so it was like fairyland to them.

We found one large, gaily decorated erection belonging to one of the Nawabs of Hyderabad, and the women called us in and plied us with many questions, and then begged us to go to their house to see them. We went one day to find these new friends. After driving two or three miles we came to a quaint walled village, passed under the gateway, and were directed to the great man's house. We were told he had two hundred women in his zenana. In front of the house we saw a young man with a drawn sword, just about to mount his horse. He seemed much amused when we told him we wanted to go and see the ladies, but he conducted us in to see the head of the house. He was very polite, and asked us why we had come, etc. We told him our commission and showed our Gospel, and at last he said, "Oh, yes! You can go in." So we were conducted to the other side of the courtyard and came to an enormous iron gate. A little door in the middle of it was opened for us to squeeze through, and we were in the zenana.

Outside were plenty of sun and air, a grand, spacious courtyard with beds of flowers, and arched verandahs with large cushions to sit on and lean against.

Inside was a narrow courtyard which gave you the impression of not being big enough for all the women and children who crowded round. No garden, no flowers, no pretty verandahs, nor cushions. Old ladies and young girls, my heart

sank as I saw them all shut in together in this prison. They were very pleased for us to sing for them, but it seemed impossible to talk to them. Even if *one* wanted to listen the others would not let her. We always came away with a sad feeling. The woman who first asked us to go seemed to be in disgrace when we went the second time, and would not come near us, and there seemed to be quite a little world to itself of intrigue and quarrel, joy, and sorrow, and sin in there. One old lady would have sung to her the quaint Hindustani bhajam "Rise, pilgrim, get ready, the time is fast going," but she did not want to hear about our Lord Jesus.

One day, when walking up a street in Hyderabad city selling Gospels, a boy called us into a large house. Here we found a little Nawab being taught by his teacher, who was very polite. The great houses give you a curious feeling; all is grand and spacious, but nothing is comfortable or home-like. Great verandahs and balconies all round the central courtyard and garden. After hearing our errand, the young Nawab offered to take us to his mother and grandmother. We went with him. In one corner of the courtyard was a funny little hole, we could not call it a door, with a dirty piece of sacking hanging in front of it. We went through and found ourselves in the zenana. Crowds of women and a dirty, dull, dreary-looking place are all that stays in my memory; but we were not allowed to

look long, for no sooner did the old grandmother find we had the Gospel of Jesus, than she had us hustled out. In vain the boy and younger woman pleaded for us to stay. She would not hear of it, so we had to go. We left some Gospels with the boy. The teacher begged for the whole Bible, which we sold him a few days later. Into many zenanas we went in this way, but we did not get invited a second time as a rule, and we generally find that having once been able to tell the Gospel in a Mussulman house, if we do go a second time, we find the women primed with stock arguments against us.

We find we get nearest to them in the medical work. We hear tales and stories in the dead of night then, when sitting with them, which we do not get a hint of at other times. I remember a woman once showing me her arm all covered with cuts which she said her husband had done to her because she had been fighting with the other wife. We, with our ideas of freedom and liberty, may think these women unhappy, but *they* do not seem to be more so than our own women. They are quite used to their own life and look down upon us poor things, who are so degraded that we allow men to see us freely with no shame! They see no privation in not being allowed to go out, or to see the world, and yet it is a suicidal system. For the women have not the least idea of what the men and boys are doing.

Many a time have I seen a mother try to chastize her boy, but he had only to get to the door and slip

but and she could not go after him. Since the girls can never go out they do not need much education of any sort, and the husband knows the wife has no knowledge whatever of the world outside, so what is the use of talking to her? So amongst Mussulmans there is stagnation, and they of nearly all the people in India make least progress. Ninety-five per cent. of them are classed as illiterate in the last census!

Still progress is being made, we feel quite sure, and one thing seems to prove this. Though the Mohammedans in South India are backward and full of things to be deplored, yet they are innocent of many things which are evidently carried on in other Mohammedan countries. We, in South India, who have for years worked amongst Moslems never heard of the customs which seem to prevail in Egypt. Divorce is rarely heard of. Possibly it is too expensive, as the husband must return the dower. A woman being married to half a dozen husbands in succession is unheard of. Surely this shows that where education spreads and where Christianity, unconsciously perhaps, permeates the whole, there is a brighter day dawning for Islam. What is wanted is more teachers, more helpers to take up the work of spreading the knowledge of the Lord in Moslem lands.

XXI

THE MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN OF TURKESTAN

AMONG the numerous nations and tribes which adhere to the doctrine of Mohammed, the condition of women is of course not everywhere the same. In the vicinity of Europe, e. g., in European Turkey, the influence of European morality and customs has become more and more prevailing in spite of the resistance of Moslem priests. Another difference in the condition of women, which can be observed everywhere and which we shall occasionally refer to, arises from their social position; among the richer classes a woman must submit to rules and customs different from those which are standard among the poorer classes. The fundamental views, however, are the same; the evil is one, though its outward appearance may differ in some respects.

The misfortune of a Mohammedan woman begins at her birth, for instead of rejoicing at the arrival of her little daughter, the mother complains that she is not a son. She knows that a girl will leave her at the age of about fourteen, in order to live in her husband's house, and after that she will hardly have any connection with her mother, whereas a son will

stay at his mother's house and support her in case she should be divorced from her husband. Moreover the mother is anxious lest her husband dismiss her and take another wife. In consequence the mother feels less affection for her daughter than she would have felt for a son; she takes little care of her and neglects her. When about six years old the little girl begins to do housework; she is ordered to carry water, to sweep the house, to do kitchen-work, and so on. For the least mistake she is scolded and beaten, and even if it happens without any reason, she is not allowed to complain or to defend herself. By this treatment the mother prepares her for the hard lot which awaits her. Sometimes also she will exclaim: "If you had had good fortune, you would have been a boy and not a girl." The father treats her with no less cruelty, so as to give her the impression that she is indeed an unfortunate creature whom God does not love.

At meal times girls take the last place and must be content with what others leave for them. When on holidays or on other occasions boys get presents, the girls go away empty-handed. Even for boy's dress more is spent than for that of the girls.

The teaching of girls is generally confined to prayers and a few chapters of the Koran, which they learn by heart mechanically. Very seldom are they taught to read and write. The exceptions are few and are always the only children of the rich or the noble. By these exceptions we know that Moham-

MOSLEM WOMEN OF THE BETTER CLASS
IN STREET DRESS (SYRIA)

medan girls are in every respect sufficiently gifted for a higher education. Many of them have become prominent scholars or artists, perfectly able to rival men. This has been proved by the prose works and poems of Zubdat-ul-Nissa (that is, Flower of Women)—by those of Leilai—and in modern times by the Persian woman Zarin Tadj, still better known by her surname Qurat-ul-Ain (that is, "Eyes' Comfort"). This woman descended from a priest's family, her father as well as her uncle and father-in-law had been great theologians, and her cousin, to whom she was married, was a distinguished scholar. Her extraordinary beauty seems to have been surpassed only by her intellect and character. When but a child she took a great interest in the conversations on science which were often carried on in her family, and surprised everybody by her sharp wit and rich mind.

When later on she became acquainted with the doctrines of the Bab, a new leader, who appeared in Persia about the middle of last century, she was so deeply impressed by them that she entered into intercourse with him, and in spite of the resistance of her family, appeared in public in order to proclaim her master's doctrines.

Let us try to give Mohammedan women a share in the higher spiritual life of their western sisters, and the slave creatures who serve only their husbands' pleasure and ease will become companions in his life-work and educators of his children. This

would produce a perfect change in Moslem family-life.

This vision of the future, however, is not yet fulfilled. The Mohammedan girl spends her childhood in a dreary way, knowing that until her fourteenth or fifteenth year life will not be changed. Then her parents will marry her to a man, in the choice of whom they will be led by financial reasons only. The young man's mother or some other elder relation of his chooses a bride for him, and examines the girl with regard to her health and bodily charms. Sometimes the young people are allowed to exchange a few words with each other in presence of the mother, but to get acquainted with each other as in Christian lands is considered superfluous. After marriage she is a slave not only to her husband, but also to her parents-in-law, towards whom she must behave most courteously, and whom she must serve sometimes even before serving her husband. Every morning she rises first and cleans the house; then she must bring her father-in-law water to wash himself, and afterwards his repast. Prudence makes her try to gain the affection of her parents-in-law, that they may protect her, in case her husband should dismiss her. Moreover, in the first year after her marriage a young wife is not allowed to answer the questions of her parents and brothers-in-law save by bowing or shaking her head; only if no one else is present, she may talk to them. In the fourth year she is permitted to an-

swer by saying "no" or "yes"; after the birth of a child, however, she may talk to every one. Besides, it is considered unbecoming that in the presence of her parents-in-law she should sit near her husband or occupy herself with her children. The only change and pleasure in a married woman's life are the visits which she exchanges every now and then with her parents, relations, and friends, as well as the weddings and religious festivities which she is allowed to attend.

The greatest misfortune in the life of a Mohammedan woman, however, is the absolute uncertainty of the duration of her marriage, which robs her of all real happiness. According to Moslem law, every Mohammedan is entitled to take four legitimate wives. Although Moslem law demands that a man who has several wives ought to treat them equally, and forbids the neglect of one by preferring the other, matters are generally different in reality. The first wife, instead of retaining a certain pre-eminence, as would be just, gradually becomes the servant of her fellow-wife or wives; if not, her husband dismisses her at last. It is impossible to give all the particulars of the misery which needs must result from such marriages, not only for the wife herself, but very often also for her children.

The idea, that woman is a subordinate creature, destined only to serve man, has been so to say numerically expressed in the Mohammedan law of inheritance, all the particulars of which are founded

on the principle: two parts to man, one part to woman. For instance, after the death of the wife, the husband inherits a quarter of her fortune, in case there are children; if there are none, half of it, whereas, the wife inherits only a quarter or an eighth. If several wives survive their husband, they inherit these parts together. Accordingly, daughters inherit only half as much as sons.

Very seldom a Mohammedan widow is married again. She generally stays in her late husband's house, in order to educate her children, for whom a tutor is chosen. The tutor administers the children's fortune and gives the mother as much money as is necessary for their subsistence. When the children are grown up, the mother generally stays for the rest of her life at one of her sons', not so often at a daughter's. In poor families, however, the woman strives hard to gain her living by washing, spinning, sewing, knitting stockings, and other things of that kind. Later on the grown-up children sustain their mother, so that women who have children spend their old age in comparative comfort. If, however, a widow, perhaps for want, consents to be married again, her own condition may be improved, but her children suffer.

Some older women must be mentioned who are rather frequent in Moslem lands, and who form a class by themselves. Generally they have been married several times, but either have no children, or have abandoned them to their fate. They pass their

old age without a companion and gain their living in as easy a manner as possible, being not very particular in choosing the means. Outwardly they seem to be utterly devoted to their religious duties, and are always seen to murmur prayers and count their beads, by which behavior even religious people are often deceived so as to support them. On closer observation, however, their real occupation proves to be roaming about in the houses and intruding themselves in a skilful and unobserved way in order to spy out people's whereabouts. They try to make themselves agreeable to the female members of the household by tale-bearing or making commissions of different kinds, particularly those which the women cannot make themselves or which the landlord of the house must not know about. Thus they gain influence over those whom they have served, and assure themselves of their gratitude. They promote love-intrigues, make marriages, and so on; if desired, they will also go to some celebrated fortune-teller, in order to secure a talisman.

These talismans or amulets generally consist of a scrap of paper, on which there are written sayings, names, letters, figures, or signs with common ink, or often with a yellow liquid made of saffron, musk, or amber; sometimes even serpent's blood is used for this purpose. If the talisman is to be worn on the body, the paper is folded in the form of a triangle or a quadrant, then wrapped in a piece of cotton which has been made water-proof, and at

last covered with a piece of fine cloth. The amulet is fastened upon the head or tied around the upper-arm or worn on the breast, with a string around the neck. Some people sew it upon the inside of their clothes so that it lies on the backbone or on the heart. Sometimes the amulet must be fastened with seven-colored silk. Sometimes also it is thrown into water, to be drunk as soon as the writing is dissolved, or it is burnt and they breathe the smoke.

Talismans and amulets are said to protect men and animals from the evil eye, from the bite of wild beasts, and from wounds in war; they cause love or hatred, they produce or prevent sleep and madness. Their preparation is considered a special science, which demands special study and is practised by so-called magicians or fortune-tellers, but also by dervishes, and even by priests. The latter generally only write verses from the Koran, which women wear around their neck as amulets.

Perhaps all this superstition is harmless in itself or does a direct harm only to their purses. Indirectly, however, it has a demoralizing influence upon all classes of people, especially upon women, who, as guardians of customs, are most attached to these fables. Only true civilization and Christianity will redeem and deliver.

In order to deepen the impression of what has been said and to add something from real life, I will tell the story of a Moslem woman, just as I heard

it in Kashgar, where I have been working for five years for the spreading of the Gospel.

Some fifty years ago there lived in Kashgar a man called Chodsha Burhaneddin. He was descended from a family which since the middle of the seventeenth century has given Kashgar its kings. His fellow citizens esteemed him very much on account of his strict observance of the religious prescriptions of Islam. He married a woman of noble descent, and for some time contented himself with his one wife. But according to Islam it is a merit to take if possible four wives, in order to increase the number of the adherents of Islam. For this reason Chodsha brought home another wife whenever he travelled on business to the Russian town of Andishan on that side of the Tienshan, until the number of four was full. The consequence was that he not only neglected his first wife, but even had her do all the housework alone, thus making her the servant of his three other wives. She had to serve them from early morning till late at night. Without grumbling and with great diligence the poor woman took all the work upon herself; secretly, however, she bewailed her hard lot and employed her few free hours for the education of her little daughter. However, she did not succeed in satisfying her husband. He always found fault, beat her, and bade her not show her face before him. His wife submitted patiently and silently; she desisted even from paying visits to her parents and acquaintances,

which would have given her some comfort, lest her husband think she had gone to her beloved ones to complain of his treatment. Four years passed. Meanwhile several political revolutions had taken place in Kashgar. In China the numerous Chinese Mohammedans had revolted, and the revolt had spread over the western countries. In eastern Turkestan the Chinese officials as well as the soldiers and the merchants had been killed by the Mohammedans; only a few escaped death by accepting Islam. This state of matters was put an end to by Jakob Beg. He had come from Chanab Chokand, north of the Tienshan, under the pretext of helping the descendant of the old Kashgarian dynasty of the Chodshas to the throne. In due time he put the Prince aside and founded a kingdom of his own, which included the whole of eastern Turkestan. After taking hold of the government he tried to weaken the Chodshas in every way possible, some of them were assassinated, others put in prison in order to be executed. One of the latter was Chodsha Burhaneddin. As soon as his wife heard that her husband had been made a prisoner, she hurried to her father, who was well esteemed at Jakob Beg's court, and besought him to make the most of his influence in order to save her husband. Then she prepared a meal, took it to her imprisoned husband, and encouraged him. At his request she roused her father still more so as to betake himself at once to Jakob Beg, and to prevail on him to set the

women but know to what height Christianity would raise them! Could they but compare the Mohammedan proverb: "Do not ask a woman's advice, and if she gives it, do the contrary," with the Apostle Paul's words: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife, loveth himself" (Ephes. v: 28), and "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," they would know the distance which separates Christian views from those of Islam.

If on summer evenings when the heat of the day is over, the inhabitant of a Mohammedan town goes out for a walk to enjoy the evening coolness before the gates, he will sometimes pass the burial-grounds. Weeping and wailing come to his ear. Pitifully he will look at the figures of mourning women who are kneeling by the graves. But the sorrow which is revealed there is not always meant for the loss of some beloved one dead; very often women visit the graves of their relations or, if they have none, of saints, in order to weep out undisturbed and unheard their hopeless, desolate lives. In their houses they dare not give way to their sorrows for fear of their husbands, therefore they go to the dead in order to tell them their griefs!

May these words bring that sound of wailing to the hearts of Christian women! May they, for whom Christian morality has made life fair and worthy, who as a beloved husband's true friend and companion take part in his joys and sorrows, or

those who in the fulfilment of self-chosen duties have found happiness and content, may they often remember the hard fate of their Moslem sisters in the Orient, and help carry the message of salvation to them.

XXII

IN FAR-OFF CATHAY

THE social condition of Mohammedan women in Kansu Province in Northwest China is not so hard as those of their sisters in the more western countries. The Mohammedans, having been in China now about a thousand years, have, save in the matter of idolatry, practically adopted the Chinese customs, even to the binding of the feet of their little girls. Among the wealthier Mohammedans, as with the wealthier Chinese, polygamy is common, many having two or three wives, and among the middle class, when there has been no issue by the first wife, many take unto themselves a second wife. Divorces are of rare occurrence.

There are no harems. The better-class women are not seen much on the streets, but in the country places, the farmer's wife, daughters, and daughters-in-law go out into the fields, weed and reap the corn, carry water, gather in fuel, and wear no veil. The daughters and daughters-in-law of the better class, from the age of fifteen to thirty, often wear a black veil when going on a visit to their friends, as also do the Chinese.

In the busy farming seasons, the Mohammedan men, with their wives of the poorer class, hire themselves out to the Chinese farmers, and come down in large numbers to weed in the spring and gather in the corn in summer and autumn. They bring their children with them and stay on the farm till the busy time is over. We always get a goodly number of visits from them.

Speaking of the Mohammedan male population in our prefecture of Si-ning, the vast majority are ignorant of the tenets of the Koran, know little of anything, save that Masheng-ren is their prophet, and that there is a Supreme Being somewhere of whom they are almost as ignorant as the Chinese. They seem to realize it a duty to attend worship on two special occasions each year, but the majority of them never darken the mosque doors at other times. Seldom a day passes but we have Mohammedan visitors, and the answer we get from nine out of every ten to questions about their doctrine is, "We are only blind folks and we do not know anything." Their ah-hongs or pastors do not trouble to teach any save the students, for which they are paid. Some even speak of heaven as being Khuda (God). In many ways are they influenced by the Chinese around them.

Already I have referred to the binding of the feet of their little girls. In sickness it is a common thing to see the patient with a tiny book written in Arabic bound up in red cloth and sewn on the

shoulder or back of the outside garment, to shield them from the evil spirits. Many also observe the lucky and unlucky days in the Chinese calendar, by removing from one house to another. One of our patients had even resorted to the Buddhists or agnostics to recite prayers and use charms to drive away his sickness.

At the present rate of spiritual declension, in another century many will either be Buddhists or agnostics.

The times of prayer are not observed save by the ah-hongs and mullahs and a few of the old men.

These few particulars showing the indifference and ignorance among the men, what can be expected of the women? They are heathen, except in name. In our prefecture, we receive a welcome among them whenever we go, but how long this will continue it is hard to tell. In the southwest of this province, where formerly much friendliness was shown towards the missionaries, latterly a spirit of bitterness and opposition has been manifested owing to a few becoming interested in the Gospel and attending regularly on Sunday. The ah-hongs have warned their people that if any join the church they will be put to death when the foreign ambassador arrives from Turkey. Who this individual is, is not very apparent, and from whence he will get his power to put Chinese subjects to death is a mystery. Doubtless it is only a scheme of the ah-hongs to put the people in fear.

So far, however, we have open doors here and no opposition, but owing to lack of workers there is NO ONE TO ENTER IN, NO ONE to take the Bread of Life to them, NO ONE to bear the glad news to them.

After the rebellion of 1895, when retribution fell heavily on the Mohammedans, thousands of them were reduced to the verge of starvation; women, who had been accustomed to the comforts of a good home, were deprived of their warm winter clothing and left only with thin summer tattered garments, right in the depth of winter with a thermometer registering below zero (Fahrenheit). By the help of many kind friends in different parts of China, we were enabled to open a soup-kitchen and provide hot food every day for six weeks, during the bitterest part of the winter, to an average of three hundred persons each day, and also to give away several warm garments to those in direst need. Every day we taught the people to repeat hymns, grace before meat, and told them stories from the Bible. On the Chinese New Year's Day we gave them a special treat of mutton-broth and afterwards showed them, with the magic lantern, some scenes in the life of our Lord. In the winter of 1896-7 we again provided food to an average of one hundred and twenty each day, nearly all widows and children.

When the rebellion was over the Mohammedans were no longer permitted to reside in the east suburb, where formerly they numbered ten thousand

persons, save a few of the poor widows who gained a subsistence by begging, but were sent to reside in a few villages thirty miles from the city. Occasionally we have a visit from some of the women and it is cheering to find that they remember much of what was told them in those years of their adversity, and we may hope that some at least will meet us in the white-robed throng hereafter.

At present we have one Mohammedan woman, much interested in the Gospel, who comes regularly to worship on Sundays when the farmers are not busy. One difficulty stands in their way and that is, the Chinese women hate them and scorn to sit beside them, and we cannot wonder, for they have suffered much at their hands, many having lost their all twice in their lifetime, and some thrice; nevertheless, we are thankful for the more Christ-like spirit shown towards them by the Christians, who are willing to forget the past and give them a welcome, converse with them freely, and recognize them as sisters for whom also Christ hath died.

There are two sects of Mohammedans in our district and there are often serious quarrels between them, and some of the people fear that if many Mohammedans became Christians serious trouble might ensue; but we feel sure that if the Christians manifest the spirit of their Master, loving their enemies, blessing their persecutors, praying for those who ill-treat them, that finally they would disarm their hatred and be permitted to live in peace;

whereas the two sects lacking that inward spiritual grace, hating each other, and backbiting each other, finally bring about strife.

The careful readers of this chapter will observe from what we have written that the life of their Mohammedan sisters in China is not so hard and prison-like as that of their sisters in North Africa, Persia, etc., where they are secluded for a lifetime in the prison-like harems at the command of their husbands. Nevertheless, their need is just as great, their souls just as precious, their ignorance of spiritual things just as deep, their lives just as much of a blank, their hope for the future just as dark; they live and die "just like animals," they are wont to say; and all the hopelessness, darkness, and lovelessness continues not because of their SECLUSION in harems at the mercy of their husbands but because of their EXCLUSION from their right to the joys and hope of the Christian life by the lukewarm indifference of the Church of Christ to-day, which fails to realize the great responsibility to carry the Gospel to every creature.

In our vast parish, stretching one hundred miles from east to west and two hundred and thirty miles from southeast to northwest, comprising six cities, sixteen walled towns, and thousands of villages with a mixed population of Chinese, Mohammedans, Mongolians, Tibetans, and aborigines, my husband and I are left to labor alone. This does not spell seclusion but exclusion from the knowledge of the

Way of Salvation for tens of thousands of souls for whom Christ died.

When Jesus saw the leper He had compassion on him; when He saw the widow of Nain He said "Weep not"; when the mourners wept at the grave of Lazarus He saw them and wept also; when He looked from the Mount of Olives on the city of Jerusalem and thought of her doom, He wept. Would that in a vision or in a dream of the night, you could behold something of the hopelessness of your less favored sisters; would that you could hear just a few of their plaintive cries and see tears rolling down their cheeks as they unburden their sorrows to the sympathetic ear. Then, methinks, you would not rest till you had accomplished something to make these many dark hearts brighter and sad hearts lighter.

XXIII

OUR MOSLEM SISTERS IN JAVA

(*Translated from the Dutch*)

THE life of the Mohammedan woman in general here is not that of a being on a par with man, but rather comparable with that of a dumb animal, a creature inferior to and much less worthy than man, which is kept and utilized as long as it performs some services.

Fatalism, as taught and nourished by Islam, places the woman in a servile relationship to the man, so much so that she, although considered a creature of no particular value, does not take offence at being accounted a negligible quantity.

Maltreatment of women takes place occasionally but is by no means general, because nothing hinders the husband from driving away his wife with whom he may not be satisfied, without even observing the simplest form of a legal procedure.

Why should the man, particularly amongst Moslems, "the Lord of Creation," weary himself or even become angry, seeing it is far wiser and more profitable that he exchange the worn-out wife and mother, who can no longer add to the number of his

children, for a younger and stronger wife? This profitable barter, too, need cost him but a trifle.

This exchange of wives has even a more demoralizing tendency than the practice of polygamy itself, which luxury only those can participate in whose salary is at least fifteen florins per month.

The results of the sinful practice of polygamy, especially for the children and consequently for the state, would be less sad to contemplate, were it not that the polygamist exchanges his wife as readily for another as he who can afford but one wife at a time.

It is scarcely necessary for me to enumerate here the effects of this evil of which the wife is the victim.

This much-loved evil is a strong bulwark against the spread of the ethics of Christianity.

A second and a very powerful opponent of mission work is found in the peculiar Mohammedan village organization, in which the Moslem sheikh or spiritual leader plays the most important rôle.

Another peculiarity of Islam here, is the fact that the inland population and the millions of inhabitants who live in the lowlands of Java are peculiarly interrelated and mutually dependent. Only in a few of the larger towns in Java do we find the trades practised.

The villager is a farmer, and since rice is the chief article of food and this must be raised by irrigation channels in a hilly country like Java, the vil-

lagers are, as a matter of course, compelled to live at peace with one another, becoming interdependent through the production of the staff of life.

A Moslem family that becomes Christian soon experiences deprivation. The so-called "silent power" soon makes its influence felt, ostracising them from every privilege.

This becomes the more easy to understand when we remember that the division of the cultivable soil and of the water supply with all other civil rights and privileges, are entrusted by Dutch law to the Mohammedan village government, in which the Moslem sheikh or priest enjoys an ex-officio vote.

Because of this peculiar condition of life in the East Indies, the writer and other missionaries in Java have purposely settled in an inland district in the very midst of the Mohammedan population, where those families who have embraced Christianity may gather about the mission centre and gradually form a nucleus (in course of time a village or town), where independent legal privileges may be enjoyed and the people ruled over by their own native Christian chiefs. In this manner these communities can gradually become "a salt" and "a light" for their Mohammedan environment.

Of very much importance in this connection is the action taken by Her Majesty, our beloved Queen Wilhelmina, who—at the request of our former Minister of Colonies, the Honorable Mr. Van Idenburg, at present Governor of Paramaribo, in South

America—commissioned the States-General of the Netherlands to describe and protect the legal status of the native Christians.

By reason of this our Christian converts can now claim at least the right of existence, and even the native Christian woman can obtain that justice before the law to which she is entitled.

XXIV

THE MOHAMMEDAN WOMEN OF MALAYSIA

MALAYSIA comprises the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago. The latter includes the great islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, and Celebes, and innumerable smaller ones. The one island of Java contains about three-fourths of the entire population of Malaysia, which is probably about forty millions. The vast majority of the population are Mohammedans, but the hill-tribes of the Peninsula and of the larger islands are still heathen, the Dyaks of Borneo and the Battas of Sumatra being the most numerous of the non-Mohammedan races. There are also many hundreds of thousands of Chinese immigrants in Malaysia, of whom only one here and there have become Mohammedan.

The principal Mohammedan races are: (1) the Malays proper, who inhabit the Peninsula, the east coast of Sumatra, and the neighboring islands, and are scattered to some extent amongst all the seaport towns of the Archipelago; (2) in Sumatra, the Achinese in the north, and the Rejans and Lampongs in the south; (3) in Java, the Sundanese in the west, the Javanese in the centre and east, and the

Madurese in the extreme east; and (4) the Bugis in Celebes.

The greatest success in the conversion of Mohammedans to Christianity has been achieved by the German (Barmen) Mission in Sumatra, and chiefly among the Battas, a very numerous heathen race, who have been gradually won in small numbers to the faith of Islam, probably for centuries. About fifty thousand of the Battas are now Christians, and many of these were at one time Mohammedans.

In Java the Dutch have made considerable efforts to convert the natives to Christianity for three hundred years past, and as the result of this early work there are considerable Christian communities still existing. It is only within the last century, however, that the work of the missionary societies has infused new life into the work of converting the Mohammedans. The greatest numerical success has been achieved by those who devote their efforts to the founding of Christian communities in villages of their own, entirely distinct from the Mohammedans, with their own Christian village headmen. It is found that in the Mohammedan villages the Christians suffer so much persecution from the headmen and others, that in some cases Christianity has been entirely stamped out, and the Christians have disappeared, no one knows where. The Christian villages have in most cases been established in unsettled districts, whole families being moved from other

places, and clearing the jungle to form their own settlements. These people have been won to Christ by preaching among the Mohammedans, and are protected from persecution by thus gathering them into Christian communities. Much work is also done by means of schools and dispensaries. The Dutch Government provides both the school buildings and salaries of schoolmasters, under certain rules, and it also erects hospitals, and provides medicines free to every missionary. There are also instances in which Christian communities have grown up in the midst of Mohammedan surroundings, and it is claimed that such Christians are of a stronger type, and exercise a more powerful influence among their fellow-countrymen. A Dutch missionary writes that polygamy and divorce are very prevalent in Java, there being many who have changed husbands or wives as many as ten or twenty times. The man has to pay the priest two guilders for a divorce, but a woman would have to pay twenty-five guilders; the latter is known as "Buffalo divorce," i. e., brutal. In Java the second wife is called "A fire in the house." Four wives are allowed, and any number of concubines. In case of divorce the girls follow the father, and the boys follow the mother. Divorced women are often in straitened circumstances and become concubines or the kept mistresses of Europeans or even of the Chinese.

The largest Christian communities in Malaysia are in North Celebes and on the island of Amboina.

These are the result of the early labors of the chaplains of the Dutch East India Company.

Among the Malays proper very little missionary work has been attempted, and practically nothing has been accomplished. From 1815 to 1843 the London Missionary Society carried on work among the Malays at Penang, Malacca, and Singapore, but then withdrew all their missionaries to China, with the exception of Rev. B. P. Keasberry, who continued to work among the Malays in Singapore as a self-supporting missionary until his death, in 1872. He baptized a few Malays, both men and women, one or two of whom are still living, but make no profession of Christianity. Within the last twenty years we know of one Malay man and two or three women who have been converted to Christianity and baptized in Singapore and Penang, none of whom has gone back to Islam.

The extent to which polygamy is practised among the Malays depends very greatly upon the amount which has to be paid as dowry, and this varies very much in the different parts of the Peninsula and Eastern Sumatra. Divorce, however, is common everywhere. In our personal intercourse with the Malays, we have realized how very much the women resemble those of other nationalities in their aspirations, but how useless it is for them to try to make any real progress, because they are so tied by customs. They say, "We must be content to live as we do, for we are powerless to do otherwise." When

they go out for walks they must be closely veiled or covered, and must walk in front of the men, which seems courteous to us until we are told the reason, which is that the men can watch them, and see that they do not cast glances at other men. Many of the women learn to read the Koran, and a few learn to read and write Malayan in the government vernacular schools, but the latter is sometimes objected to on the ground that the girls will write letters to men. It is very difficult to get Malay girls to attend a Christian school, for fear they might become Christians. The people living in the agricultural districts seem to be happy and contented, and yet here polygamy is more common than in the towns. The heart of the wife and mother is often burdened because her husband has taken a second or third wife, when there is little enough money for one family to live upon. As a rule the men do not want their wives to know when they are taking new wives. They usually say they are going away to work for a few days. We have been asked to write letters to such husbands requesting money, and begging the husband to return. Sometimes the answers to these letters contain loving messages to the wife, asking her not to believe the stories told her, but still he returns not, or worse still, no money comes. The wives with tears streaming down their cheeks say, "How can his small wages support three or four wives?" In one case a wife received a letter saying that she could marry again, as the husband had de-

cided to marry another woman. We have been asked by such deserted wives to enclose love potions or medicine in letters to win back the love of the husbands. The love potions consist of the ashes of a piece of paper which has had some words written on it and is afterwards burnt, the ashes being put in a paper, enclosed in a letter and sent to a friend, who is requested to put it in a cup of coffee, and give it to the wayward husband. One woman whom we knew personally had been deserted by her husband; she lived in a house by herself, and would not leave it for more than an hour at a time, fearing her husband would return and accuse her of unfaithfulness. She earned her living partly by taking in sewing, and her relatives would help her as they could. A young girl was to be married to a man who had a wife and family in another town. We asked the girl's mother if she knew about this. She replied, "Yes, but he has fair wages; he can support two wives." We enquired of a relative of the bridegroom's first wife if she knew her husband was to be married again. She answered, "He will not tell her, but I am sure she will feel it in her heart." In many cases the deserted wives have to support the children, which they do by sewing or making and selling cakes.

XXV

"WHAT WILT THOU HAVE ME TO DO?"

THOSE of us who have read the pages of this book right through to the end, will find such words as are at the head of this chapter rise involuntarily to our lips. What must we do? There is a danger in the very magnitude of the task producing a hopelessness and sense of impotence in ourselves so great that we shall do nothing. We may wait for someone else or even a future generation to take up the work, but we cannot so escape our responsibility. We need to confess ourselves guilty in that we have as yet done nothing and absolutely trust the One who is omnipotent to teach us what to do, and give us the power to do it.

The following methods have been tried and each one is capable of further development. Women's medical work has removed prejudice and opened closed doors. We should have many more women missionary doctors and qualified nurses, especially those skilled in midwifery. They are often only summoned to attend difficult or dangerous cases, so that it is a necessity to be *thoroughly efficient,* and they need the missionary spirit. Women's hospitals as a base of operations are needed, so that those

who cannot be attended to in their own homes, with any hope of cure, may be admitted to the hospital. But there should be associated with every nurse or doctor some workers who are wholly given up to evangelistic work. Through lack of these much of the influence of the medical missionary fails to accomplish its wished-for result. The doctors and nurses feel this themselves strongly. The same is felt everywhere amongst educational missionaries. The work of the school needs to be followed up by the visit to the home. There are countless doors open to the young wives who have been taught in school, and who would delight in a visit from one of the mission ladies.

This might be done by older workers and we earnestly urge that women's missionary boards and societies should be willing to receive women for this department older than they can take for school or medical work. The language is learnt through constant intercourse with the women. If older women who could meet their own expenses might be allowed to give themselves solely to this evangelistic work, we believe that a large increase would be made to our missionary force.

Women's settlements are only beginning to be tried in different parts of the field, but we believe that this method would be found very helpful both in towns and villages, but especially in the villages. The thought is, to have a group of about four workers and one or two native helpers living to-

A CRY OF DISTRESS FROM ALGIERS

gether, composing a women's household, into which the Moslem women may freely come without fear of meeting any men. These settlements should be within easy reach of an ordinary mission station, so that the work should be part of the whole, and the husbands should be cared for by others at the same time. School, medical, and evangelistic work may all be done from a settlement.

It is felt in the educational work that girl's boarding schools are far more fruitful for good than day schools. One sort of school that seems to have had the happiest results has been where a lady missionary has a little group of some twelve girls living with her. They are her companions night and day; she shares all their conversation, their play, their household duties, their lessons. The pure, refining influence of her constant companionship has more effect on these young lives than any other that has been tried. Will not many Christian women give themselves to such work as this?

Much might be done in the way of small orphanages for girls, or homes where the children of divorced mothers might be received.

The possibilities before us of what these girls might become through the home training of several years are almost unlimited. The natural intelligence and sweetness of character shown by many of them show what might be made of them. They have all the light-heartedness and merry ways of western girls, with the same tenderness towards suffering.

And at the same time there is a strength of character and determination of will that not only explains, perhaps, many of the divorces which now take place, but it raises hopes of what these girls may become, and may acomplish for the regeneration of their people.

If they become followers of Christ, they are of the stuff of which martyrs are made. One little girl in a mission school in Egypt stood up in front of all her companions and boldly said that she believed in Jesus. The news was quickly told at home and she was severely beaten. A day or two afterwards, she was back in her place at school. Her teacher asked had she been beaten very much. "Yes," she said, "but never mind, wasn't Jesus beaten for me?"

The centuries of oppression that have passed over the heads of these women have not crushed their spirit. It rises afresh against all the stupidity and ignorance of those who oppress them. And men still find out even among Moslems:

"What man on earth hath power or skill
To stem the torrent of a woman's will?
For when she will, she will, you may depend on't,
And when she won't, she won't, and there's an end on't."

That efforts to educate and train the girls are really appreciated by the men is evident from one fact known of large training schools in Syria. We are told that not one girl graduated there has been divorced, nor have any of their husbands introduced

a second wife into their homes. This shows us that what the Moslem man really needs is a wife who is able to be a companion to him. One who can talk to him, keep his home neat, and knows how to take care of his children. And in many a case the lessons of heavenly things which the young wife has learnt at school have been willingly listened to by the husband.

The chief aim in our work should be to have constant touch with the girls, to love them, to win their love, and to live Christ before them, not resting satisfied with anything short of their salvation.

But all this needs to be taken up in dead earnest; and Christian women can only do it in the power of the Holy Spirit, yielding their lives wholly to the Lord for it. If we do rise to it, and diligently give ourselves to win the women and girls of Islam for Christ, and train them up to live for Him in their homes, we shall find the answer to Abraham's prayer for his son Ishmael begin to come true: "As for Ishmael I have heard thee. Behold I have blessed him,"—and God's blessing *is life for evermore.*

And to Our Moslem Sisters may come again the words that were spoken to Hagar: *"The Lord hath heard thy affliction." "And she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me, for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me."* The fountain of water in the wilderness by which the angel found her was called Beer lahai-roi: *"The well of Him that liveth and seeth me."* And

the very name of Ishmael means, *"God shall hear."* Is it not an invitation and an encouragement to us to take on our hearts these multitudes of their children and claim the promises for them? *Blessing is life. "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."*

For this end we ask you to enter into a covenant of prayer with us, that we may not cease to intercede for our broken-hearted sisters, that they may be comforted, and for the captives of Satan, that they may be set free, that the prison gates may be opened for them so that the oil of joy may be given them for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

"Life! life! eternal life!
Jesus alone is the giver.
Life! life! abundant life!
Glory to Jesus for ever."

When this Life becomes theirs, Our Moslem Sisters will be our own sisters in a new sense of the word, and we shall see the evangelization of the Mohammedan home and of all Moslem lands.

A Prayer.

"O Lord God, to whom the sceptre of right belongeth, lift up Thyself and travel in the greatness of Thy strength throughout the Mohammedan lands of the East; because of the anointing of Thy Son Jesus Christ as Thy true Prophet, Priest, and King, destroy the sword of Islam, and break the yoke of

the false prophet Mohammed from off the necks of Egypt, Arabia, Turkey, Persia, and other Moslem lands, so that there may be opened throughout these lands a great door and effectual for the Gospel, that the Word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, and the veil upon so many hearts may be removed, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen." (From the C. M. S. Cycle of Prayer.)

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